

# BLUNT INSTRUMENTS

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Nr. CZTERY (#4) — "THE SUMMER ISSUE"

CIRCULATION: 81

AUGUST 14TH, 1987

When I first contemplated publishing, I wondered what I would do when this time of year rolled around. Sooner or later, I thought, baseball season would start, and I would either be forced to talk about it, or confirm the unpleasant suspicion some people already have that I am some sort of alien subversive. Faced with such a choice, I think I'll opt for the latter.

Actually, I used to rather enjoy baseball, but I've found that my enjoyment has decreased somewhat over the years, although I'm not quite sure why. Following the Tigers when I was smaller was something of an exercise in futility, though the championship in 1984 made up for a lot of the frustration. Even then, when everyone was talking dynasty after the wire-to-wire dominance of the '84 team, Detroit went right back down where they came from. Losing Lance Parrish didn't do them any good.

So what do we talk about, then? *Football!* (I mean *soccer*.) European Championships time it is, which means that it's also time for Poland to show Europe how to play the game properly. Actually, that's not quite true. The fact of the matter is that Poland, after a fairly respectable start in Group 5 of the qualifiers last fall, collapsed completely after the winter break, losing to both Greece and Hungary (the former club, currently leading the group, lost to Poland 2-1 in October). Not only that, but Poland could only manage a scoreless draw with *Cyprus*, a club so weak that when I first wrote this cover page some months ago, I assumed that Poland had beaten them, even though I had not heard the score. The 5-3 loss to Hungary in May was rather less surprising, but still came as a bit of a shock. What's more, Hungary beat the under-21 team 3-0 on the very same day. I had better stop — this is getting embarrassing.

Completely off the subject, the other night I saw a CBS special entitled *The Battle for Afghanistan*. Upon first hearing about it, I was quite anxious to see it. Unfortunately, I was disappointed. The advertisement had asked the tired question, "Have the Soviets created their own Vietnam?" The programme, however, made no attempt to answer this. Rather, it focused on the activities of one guerilla leader, detailing two *mujahedin* operations, one against the power lines leading to Kabul and one against a mountain village and its adjacent airfield. The personalized style of the documentary, however, was completely contrary to the impression the advertisement gave, which was that it would make a serious inquiry into the nature and course of the conflict, sort of a "Firing Line" on a road trip. Instead, I was treated to an hour of pictures of refugees, and a narrator who somberly recited figures describing the depopulation of the country. I guess that what I get for expecting serious scholarship during prime time.

For those of you who didn't get a fake *Random Thought*, but would like to see it, you can write me for a copy (and send a stamp). If you don't get the 'zine in the first place, some of the humor might be lost on you. Nevertheless, it seems to have amused some people. Jeff was so awed by it that he has decided to turn over the whole enterprise to someone with a sharper wit. From now on, Jeff will devote himself to publishing fake 'zines as a punishment for allowing himself to be so easily fooled. First up is *Penguin Dip*....

Yes, there are two errors on the game maps in this issue — see if you can find them.

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*Blunt Instruments* a Diplomacy journal published by an aspiring intellectual named Bruce Geryk, residing at 5528 S. Everett, Apt. 3D, Chicago, Illinois, 60637. His telephone number is (312) 324-6460, although actually reaching him is often nearly impossible. Subscriptions are \$1.10 for single issues, or \$10 for ten. Residents of countries other than the United States receive two free issues upon subscribing for ten. There is no extra charge for airmail delivery. Diplomacy is a trademark of the Avalon Hill Game Company, and is not a substitute for regular exercise.

# the arena

The *Civilization* game that I announced some issues ago almost got off the ground, but a few things have kept it from starting. At one point I almost had enough players, but was unsure of the status of one potential player, and did not want to have the game begin with an NMR. While I was checking into that, another player had to resign due to lack of time to take on new games, so I am left with one slot in this game, perhaps even two. People who have either paid the \$5 gamefee or expressed a desire to play are Bill Becker, Brian Kegerreis, Claude Morest, Marc Peters, and Jeff Zarse. If you would like to help these fine gentlemen begin their game, why not sign up? Games in *BI* are not meant to run on the same deadlines as the 'zine, so the game will be run by flyer regardless of how negligent I am with the main 'zine. Any takers? Preference lists are encouraged. So far only Claude and Jeff have sent them.

In addition, *British Rails* now has four players signed up: Bruce Linsey, Jeff Zarse, Jack Lemon, and Charles Hardage. Because of the lack of interest in this game, I am considering dropping it. I have found that the postal *EB/BR* hobby is quite limited in terms of potential players. I think this is due to the fact that the field of players is composed almost exclusively of people who already own the game and had already played it ftf when Bruce Linsey singlehandedly established the postal *EB* hobby. With Bruce, Jeff Zarse, and Paul Gardner all running games, the market seems to have been saturated, and unless new players can be recruited, I don't expect postal *EB* to expand much past a maximum of three games being played at once. I certainly wouldn't want to play more than one *EB* game at a time, and I suspect that not many others do, either. So, if you really want to play *BR* here, please sign up now. If you're already signed up, and don't want this to be dropped, why not do some recruiting on your own? Tell 'em I sent you.

As always, I'm still looking for suggestions as to possible games to run. If *Civilization* and *British Rails* don't turn you on, there are always others. My main interest lies in two-player boardgames, and if I were to GM something like this I couldn't promise to involve more than two people in a game, but if anyone is interested, I'll be happy to hear from you. I've always been intrigued by the idea of a limited-intelligence version of a Napoleonic game, like *Struggle of Nations* or Victory Games' *1809*. The latter would make a fantastic "fog of war" game, I think. Is there any interest in something like this?

Someone also mentioned an interest in postal *Titan*. While it is true that I am a veritable *Titan* fanatic, I am leery of running it by mail. I'm currently playing in a game run by Pete Gaughan in *Perelandra*, and while Pete has done a singularly outstanding job in keeping the game running smoothly and without errors, he has told me that it involves as much work as three or four *Diplomacy* games. Coupled with the fact that in order to keep it moving it has to be run on two-week deadlines, I would be faced with the prospect of a game which occupied as much of my time as six or eight *Diplomacy* matches. An enthusiastic novice publisher I might be, but stupid I am certainly not. When we finally get another non-Dip game off the ground, and some of the regular games end, I'll take a look at what I might want to run.

A *United* league is also being run on separate flyer. One complete division has filled, and the second will begin its schedule as soon as I get six more players. This league will be run using modified *United* rules composed by Dan Stafford and myself. These rules are also being used for a mini-league now being organized by Steve Clark, to run in his subzine to *Random Thought*. Steve can be found at 5425 S. Woodlawn Ave., Apt. 3B, Chicago, IL 60615. Those not familiar with *United* can get a copy of the rules from me for a 22¢ stamp. I really want to push this because I think that *United* is one of the most enjoyable postal games around, and suffers from the same lack of interest in the United States that the sport of football does in general. If you have never played *United*, you might want to give Steve's league a go, as he is going to try to get a group of new players together, as opposed to the *United* veterans which usually fill up new leagues. Besides, if you play in *Furball* (Steve's subzine), you'll be getting *Random Thought*.

Lastly, a suggestion was made for postal *Junta*. This sounds insane.

# GAMES IN PROGRESS

Because of *BI*'s publishing schedule, a lot goes in the games between each issue. Because of the especially long delay this time, there is a lot to catch up on. What follows is the complete set of reports for each game since the last issue. Maps have been provided as usual, but to save space, they will show only the latest positions in each game.

#####

1985AQ The Integral Trees Fall, 1907

**FRANCE** (*Holley*) **A TUS S F** tyn-ROM, **A PIE S** **GERMAN** **A tyo-ven** (nso), F mid-WES, F wes-TYN, F NAT H, F tyn-ROM, F LYO  
S F wes-TYN, F TUN S F wes-TYN.

**GERMANY** (*Hakey*) F NTH C A lon-DEN, F BAL H, F BOT H, A lon-DEN, A tyo-VIE, A BOH S A tyo-VIE, A GAL S A tyo-VIE, A SIL S A GAL, A WAR S A MOS-ukr, A MOS-ukr, A LVN S A STP-mos, A STP-mos.

**ITALY (McCrumb)** A VEN S TURKISH A tri-TYO, A rom S A VEN (d.r apu.otb).

**TURKEY** (*Chang*) A tri-TYO, A vie S A tri-TYO (d.a), A BUD S A vie, A ser-TRI, F ADR S ITALIAN A VEN, F ion-NAP, F aeg-ION, A SEV-ukr, A RUM S A SEV-ukr, F BLA-sev..

The deadline for Spring, 1908 is **Friday, May 1st, 1987**. Telephoned orders are due by **2PM** on that date. The proposed F-G-T draw failed. It is repropsoed. Note that if the dislodged Italian army retreats off the board, Italy will be at 1, even.

## 1985AQ Supply Center Chart — 1907

FRANCE	par, bre, mar, spa, por, lvp, edi, tun, ROM.....	9, +1
GERMANY	ber, mun, kie, hol, den, swe, bel, lon, war, nwy, mos.....	13, +1
ITALY	ven, <u>rom</u> , <u>nap</u> .....	1, -1
TURKEY	ank, smy, con, bul, gre, ser, rum, sev, tri, bud, <u>yie</u> , NAP.....	11, +2

**PRESS: ITALY TO WORLD:** I want you to know I voted YES for the draw. Since neither France nor Germany has any intention of changing alliances, I see no reason for continuing.

**FRANCE TO ITALY:** Take what's offered, chum.

1985AQ                      The Integral Trees                      Winter, 1907

Fra: Builds A MAR. Ger: Builds A MUN. Ita: A rom r APU; remove A apu. Tur: Builds A ANK, A CON.

Spring, 1908

**FRANCE** (*Holley*) A mar-NAP, A TUS-ven, A PIE S A TUS-ven, F WES S F TYN, F TYN C A mar-NAP, F NAT H, F ROM S A mar-NAP, F LYOC A mar-NAP, F TUN-ion.

GERMANY (*Hakey*) A den-KIE, A MUN-tyo, A BOH S A VIE, A VIE S A GAL-bud, A SIL-gal, A war-UKR, A MOS S A war-UKR, A lvn-WAR, A stp-LVN, A GAL-bud, F nth-HOL, F bal-DEN, F bot-SWE.

**ITALY** (*McCrumb*) A VEN surrenders.

**TURKEY** (*Chang*) F<sub>nap</sub> S F ION (d<sub>r</sub> apu,otb), F ION S F<sub>nap</sub>, F ADR S ITALIAN A VEN, A TRI-vie, A TYO S A TRI-vie, A BUD S A TRI-vie, A RUM S A BUD, A con-BUL, A ank-CON, A SEV H, F BLA H..

The deadline for Fall, 1908 is **Friday, May 29th, 1987**. Telephoned orders are due by **2PM** on that date. The proposed F-G-T draw failed. It is repropose.

**PRESS: ITALY TO FRANCE:** I *did* take what was offered, chum. Somebody else didn't.

1985AQ

The Integral Trees

Summer, 1908

Tur: F nap r APU.

Fall, 1908

FRANCE (Holley) A NAP-apu, A TUS S A PIE, A PIE S GERMAN A mun-TYO, F WES S F LYO-ty, F TYN-nap, F NAT H, F ROM S F TYN-nap, F LYO-ty, F TUN-ion.

GERMANY (Hakey) A mun-TYO, A kie-MUN, A BOH-vie, A GAL S A vie-bud, A vie-bud (d.a), A UKR-rum, A SIL S A GAL, A WAR-ukr, A MOS S A WAR-ukr, A LVN-war, F HOL remains in port for fitting with new V-1 rockets, F DEN H(U), F SWE(U).

ITALY (McCrumb) A VEN waves goodbye.

TURKEY (Chang) A tyo-VIE, A TRI S A tyo-VIE, A BUD S A tyo-bud (imp.nsu), F APU S ITALIAN A VEN, F ION H, F ADR S F ION, A RUM-gal, A SEV-ukr, F BLA-sev, A bul-SER, A con-BUL.

The deadline for Spring, 1909 is Friday, June 26th, 1987. Telephoned orders are due by 2PM on that date. The proposed F-G-T draw failed. It is repropoed. Also proposed is a concession to Italy.

## 1985AQ Supply Center Chart — 1908

FRANCE	par, bre, mar, spa, por, lvp, edi, tun, rom, NAP.....	10, +1
GERMANY	ber, kie, mun, hol, den, swe, bel, lon, war, nwy, mos, stp, <u>vie</u> .....	12, even
ITALY	ven.....	1, even
TURKEY	ank, smy, con, bul, gre, ser, rum, sev, tri, bud, <u>nap</u> , VIE.....	11, even

PRESS: CONSTANTINOPLE TO PARIS AND BERLIN: Without any bitterness or rancour, I ask you: OK. So what do you want NOW? You wanna drag this thing on longer and longer? I'll put up a valiant, if not futile, battle for as long as you like. Or will the age-old Franco-German animosity rear its head? Is German militarism, bored with the useless crowding in the East, seeking breathing room? Are the French republicans going to civilize the barbaric Teutons? Should we try to see what the smallest percentage of the board the 34 gamepieces are going to fit into?

CONSTANTINOPLE TO BERLIN: What color do you use when you run out, assuming you still set up the board?

VENICE TO WORLD: Give up, you guys, before I start to get rolling.

1985AQ

The Integral Trees

Winter, 1908

Fra: Builds A PAR.

Spring, 1909

FRANCE (Holley) A par-GAS, A NAP-apu, A TUS S A PIE, A PIE S GERMAN A TYO, F WES S F LYO-ty, F nat-MID, F ROM S F TYN-nap, F LYO-ty, F TUN S F LYO-ty, F TYN-nap.

GERMANY (Hakey) A MUN S A TYO, A TYO S A BOH-vie, A BOH-vie, A GAL S A BOH-vie, A SIL S A GAL, A WAR S A UKR, A UKR S A MOS-sev, A MOS-sev, A LVN-mos, F HOL throws long bomb to F Denmark, F DEN laterals to F Sweden, F SWE touchdown!!!

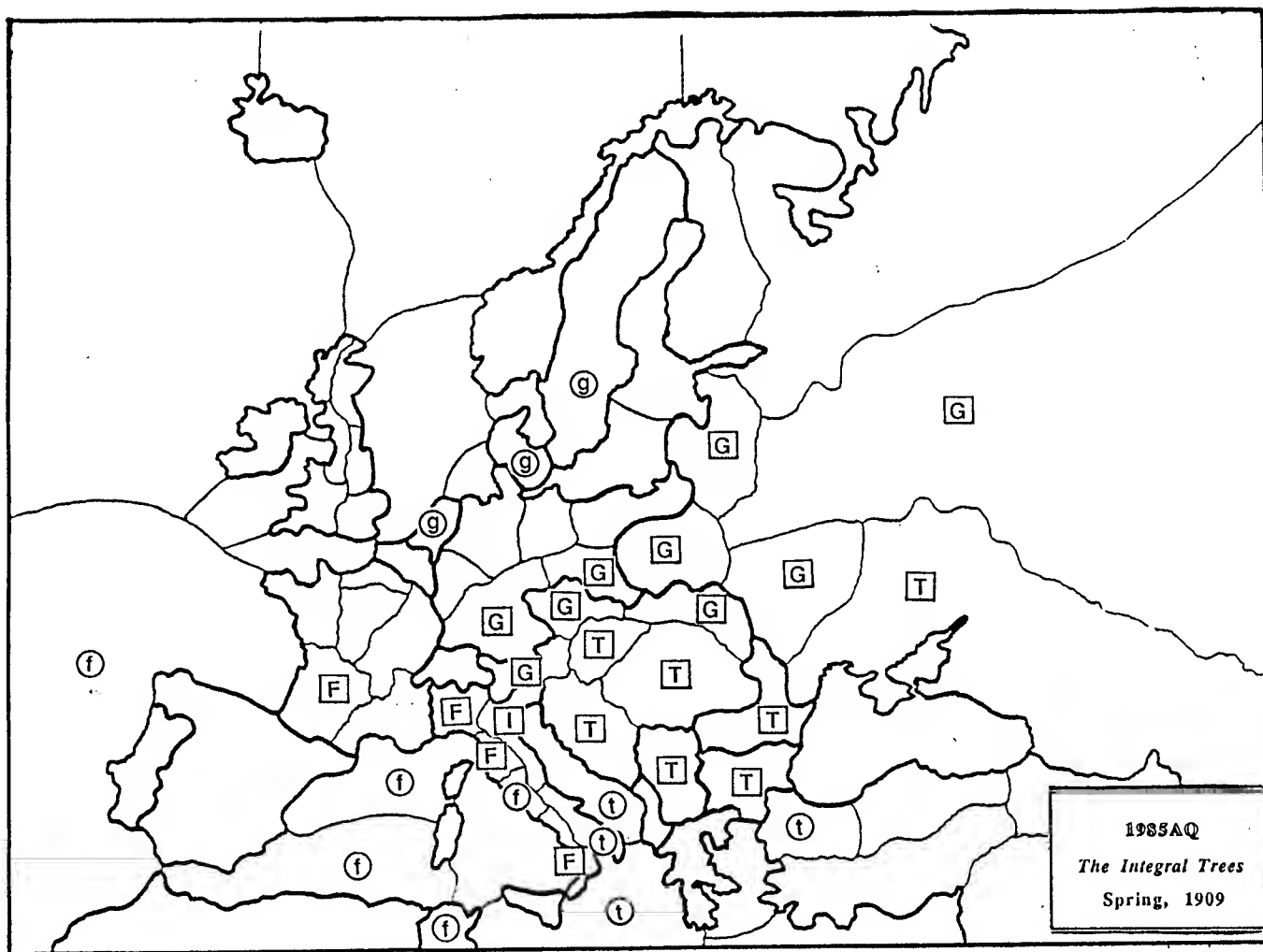
ITALY (McCrumb) A VEN S FRENCH A NAP-apu.

TURKEY (Chang) A TRI-tyo, A VIE S A TRI-tyo, A BUD S A VIE, F APU S ITALIAN A VEN, F ION S F APU, F ADR S F ION, A RUM S A SEV, A SEV S A RUM, F bla-CON, A SER-tri, A BUL-ser.

The deadline for Fall, 1909 is Friday, July 24th, 1987. Telephoned orders are due by 11PM the night before. The proposed F-G-T draw failed, as did the concession to Italy. The F-G-T draw is repropoed, and an F-G draw is proposed as well.

PRESS: BERLIN TO CONSTANTINOPLE: What crowding in the East? I kind of like the idea of fitting 34 units into a very small area ... they could even all be contiguous! Of course, I'd have to move my fleets into places like St. Petersburg, Livonia, and Finland, but that can be arranged. You realize, I hope, that if we both keep annihilating units in Vienna, we're likely to open a gate into the very netherhells themselves. Maybe we should find another place to destroy each other? Nah ... and as for what color I use when I run out, well, I just happen to have multiple sets of pieces available, so I just use more black blocks. You see, I am not the only Dip player in the apartment. Anyway, keep up the valiant battle as long as you like.

BERLIN TO VENICE: Oooh, we're shaking in our boots! Or is that just goosestepping? I forget.



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1987N

Zoliborz

Spring, 1901

AUSTRIA (*Coughlan*) F TRI-ven, A VIE-gal, A bud-SER.

ENGLAND (*O'Donnell*) F lon-NTH, F edi-NWG, A lvp-EDI.

FRANCE (*Christie*) A par-BUR, A MAR S A par-BUR, F bre-MID.

GERMANY (*Chang*) F kie-HOL, A ber-KIE, A mun-RUH.

ITALY (*Kegerreis*) A ven-PIE, A ROM-ven, F nap-ION.

RUSSIA (*Hurley*) F stp(sc)-BOT, A WAR-gal, A mos-UKR, F SEV-bla.

TURKEY (*Grigsby*) A con-BUL, A smy-CON, F ANK-bla.

The deadline for Fall, 1901 is Frlday, March 27th, 1987. Telephoned orders are due by 2PM on that date.

PRESS: VIENNA: The Emperor regrets his lack of free time lately which has prevented follow-up letters and negotiations in addition to his opening ones. A highly-placed source in the Foreign Ministry has indicated that no long-range plans have been adopted. "Nothing is set in concrete," was the phrase used.

VIENNA TO PAN GERYK: *Gdzie mam skrecic? Nad polnoc, na poludnie?, Na wschod, na zachod? Prosze mi wskazac.*

PAN GERYK TO VIENNA: *Pan mnie pyta? Tak nie wolno!*

AUSTRIA TO ITALY: I would write back if I were you, however. Your one letter scared me.

SULTAN TO ARCHDUKE BUGOFF: I have ordered that a Turkish bath be built onto your residence. I hope it meets with your approval.

FRANCE TO GERMANY: The French Republic has vowed to stamp out the export of inferior Portugese rosés and Spanish sangría. Our move to Burgundy was to inform our grape growers and wine producers that the present government is in sympathy with their demands. We will quickly subdue the Iberian Peninsula and set controls on the quality of their exports. Our army in Burgundy will proceed to other areas to convey the same message to the proper party.

**LONDON TO ALL:** This game makes for me a dozen  
and that's all I'll try until I win one.  
Hope the players that are in this one  
are better writers than were in the last one.  
No press is good press, or so they say  
but I would like to hear from everyone, every day!  
But good luck to all, except my enemies,  
and to Bruce, the best of GMing.

**ITALY TO WORLD:** Due to serious upheavals in the military structure of the King/Emperor Keg's situation, his new address for all correspondence will be (same name, OK, guys?) 619 S. CHERRY, OLATHE, KS 66061. By the way, feel free to drop by any time you're in the K.C. area. I've got an extra bed and I cook a mean spaghetti (no pun intended).

**RUSSIA TO WORLD:** Wait! This is all a terrible mistake! World peace *can* be achieved!

Great Powers who wish to learn the Holy Secret of Universal Tranquility are urged to write their name and address on the back of a \$20 bill and mail it to Grigorii Yefimovich Rasputin, c/o The Kremlin, Moscow. Act now! This offer good through Spring, '02.

Extra bonus offer! The Tsarina is now available for an evening of very personal diplomacy. Please submit your country's offer for a private session with this remarkable woman whose touch can burn the midwinter snow off the largest land mass on the planet. Send proposals to GYR, address above.

1987N Zoliborz Fall, 1901

**AUSTRIA** (*Coughlan*) A VIE-tyo, F tri-ADR, A SER A TURKISH A bul-GRE.

**ENGLAND** (*O'Donnell*) F NWG C A edi-NWY, A edi-NWY, F NTH-den.

**FRANCE** (*Christie*) A bur-MUN, A mar-SPA, F mid-POR.

**GERMANY** (*Chang*) A KIE-den, A ruh-BEL, F HOL S A ruh-BEL.

**ITALY** (*Kegerreis*) A PIE-tyo, A rom-VEN, F ion-TUN.

**RUSSIA** (*Hurley*) F bot-SWE, A ukr-RUM, F SEV S A ukr-RUM, A war-GAL.

**TURKEY** (*Grigsby*) A bul-GRE, A con-BUL, F ank-CON.

The deadline for Winter, 1901 is **Friday, May 1st, 1987**. Telephoned orders are due by **2PM** on that date. COA for Bob O'Donnell: 2700 Biehn Street #4, Klamath Falls, OR 97601.

1987N Supply Center Chart — 1901

AUSTRIA	bud, tri, vie, SER.....	4, +1
ENGLAND	lon, edi, lvp, NWY.....	4, +1
FRANCE	par, bre, mar, SPA, POR, MUN.....	6, +3
GERMANY	ber, kie, <del>mun</del> , HOL, BEL.....	4, +1
ITALY	rom, nap, ven, TUN.....	4, +1
RUSSIA	mos, stp, war, sev, RUM, SWE.....	6, +2
TURKEY	ank, smy, con, BUL, GRE.....	5, +2

**PRESS: VIENNA TO PAN GERYK:** Of course I'm asking you! Now your next question ... *Kiedy przyjada po mnie?*

**PAN GERYK TO VIENNA:** *Co, Pan ma zle w glowie?*

**AUSTRIA TO ITALY:** Your silence is forcing me to be unpleasant....

**AUSTRIA TO TURKEY:** The Emperor has no objection to a nearby Turkish bath nor to a Grecian villa. He does object to greed in the wrong places....

**SULTAN TO EMPEROR KEG:** How about forcing the Italian Postal workers back to work so that the mail can get through?

**BULGARIA:** General Amir Jamal of the First Turkish Army has generously given his troops one month leave so that they can go visit the historical sites in Greece.

**BERLIN TO LONDON:** Gee, I heard that foggy London weather was tedious, but really! Wanting to hear from everyone every day? That would take a full-time correspondent to adequately reply to all mail (but I agree with you in spirit).

**ENGLAND TO ITALY:** I am very sorry that you have chosen to ignore my calls. Please remember that I tried my very best to reach you. You don't write me ...

...just how do you play this game?

You don't write me...

... may all your moves be in vain!

1987N PRESS CONTINUED

**ST. PETERSBURG:** The Little Father of his people bids you all a happy and orthodox Easter. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the toiling masses of Our Empire for another splendid year of opulence and self-indulgence here at court. We really couldn't do it without you.

**AUSTRIA TO RUSSIA:** You have a friend in Austria as long as you are not in Galicia. If you are, Italy certainly is going to get a reprieve.

1987N

Zoliborz

Winter, 1901

**AUSTRIA** (*Gary Coughlan, 4614 Martha Cole Lane, Memphis, TN 38118*) Builds A BUD. Also has F ADR, A SER, A VIE.

**ENGLAND** (*Bob O'Donnell, 2700 Biehn Street #4, Klamath Falls, OR 97601*) Builds F EDI. Also has F NWG, A NWY, F NTH.

**FRANCE** (*Hugh Christie, 43 E. Houston St., Montgomery, PA 17752*) Builds A PAR, F BRE, A MAR. Also has A MUN, A SPA, F POR.

**GERMANY** (*Fred Chang, 822 N. Sycamore Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90038*) Builds A BER. Also has A KIE, A BEL, F HOL.

**ITALY** (*Kegerreis?*) *NBR!* Plays one short. Has A PIE, A VEN, F TUN.

**RUSSIA** (*Richard Hurley, 341 Wolf Creek Road, Grass Valley, CA 95945*) Builds A STP, A MOS. Also has F SWE, A RUM, F SEV, A GAL.

**TURKEY** (*Randy Grigsby, RR#2, 571 Sunnidale Road, Barrie, Ontario, CANADA, L4M 4S4*) Builds F SMY, A ANK. Also has A GRE, A BUL, F CON.

The deadline for Spring, 1902 is Friday, July 31st, 1987. Telephoned orders are due by 11PM the night before. Would Rodney Schmisser, 1811 Tilden, Fort Wayne, IN 46805 please stand by for Italy?

**WIEN DO PANA GERYKA:** Me crazy? No, no, you mistake my meaning. *Wzdychac. Chce przewodnika mowiacego po polsku!*

**PAN GERYK TO WIEN:** *Do czego Pan wzdycha? Pan chce pojechac do Polski? Pan morze pojechac ze mna.*

**AUSTRIA TO TURKEY:** *Wrog 1. sprzymierzeniec?* In this (nominative) case, more is better.

**AUSTRIA TO ITALY:** From all reports I've heard, you are not writing to anyone so I no longer feel singled out for special Italian attention. If you stay out of Tyrolia, and the rest of Austria, all will be well for Rome. If not, I'll be back to help the French take you apart, heedless of the cost to me. I am a survivor.

**ST. PETERSBURG:** Bulletin from the Ministry of Information! Tsarist troops entering the ancient Russian province of Galicia were swarmed today by cheering peasants and rosy-cheeked virgins wishing to change status. Discipline has been restored, however, and the happy throngs send on their way.

**GM TO AUSTRIA:** *Nasz towarzysz sni, napewnie!*

**AUSTRIA TO RUSSIA:** *Nasz cesarz—on jest z Galicji!* Austria-Hungary does not negotiate with invaders on our soil. But, just let me say, I found it somewhat incongruous that you expect me to telephone our GM during deadline week to drop all my plans in order to stop a Russian invasion of my country, and you state in the same letter that you yourself prefer to respond by mail and use the phone only in emergencies. Maybe I like to save money too. Don't let your builds go to your head, Goliath....

**ENGLAND TO AUSTRIA:** The Russian has attacked you, that much is clear,

He hopes to kill you and take Vienna this year!

If you need a friend to help you, please feel free to call

Upon this friendly Englishman—

And make the Russian take a fall!

**[RUSSIA]:** Another bulletin! The Tsar regretfully announced today an embargo of all sturgeon products to the terminally decadent aristocracy of Great Britain. "Let them eat peanut butter," were his exact words.

**AUSTRIA TO FRANCE:** My my, what big teeth you have, mon Empereur....

1987O

Mokotow

Spring, 1901

**AUSTRIA** (*Morest*) A vie-TRI, F tri-ALB, A bud-SER.

**ENGLAND** (*Richardson*) F lon-NTH, F edi-NWG, A lvp-EDI.

**FRANCE** (*Holley*) A par-PIC, A mar-SPA, F bre-MID.

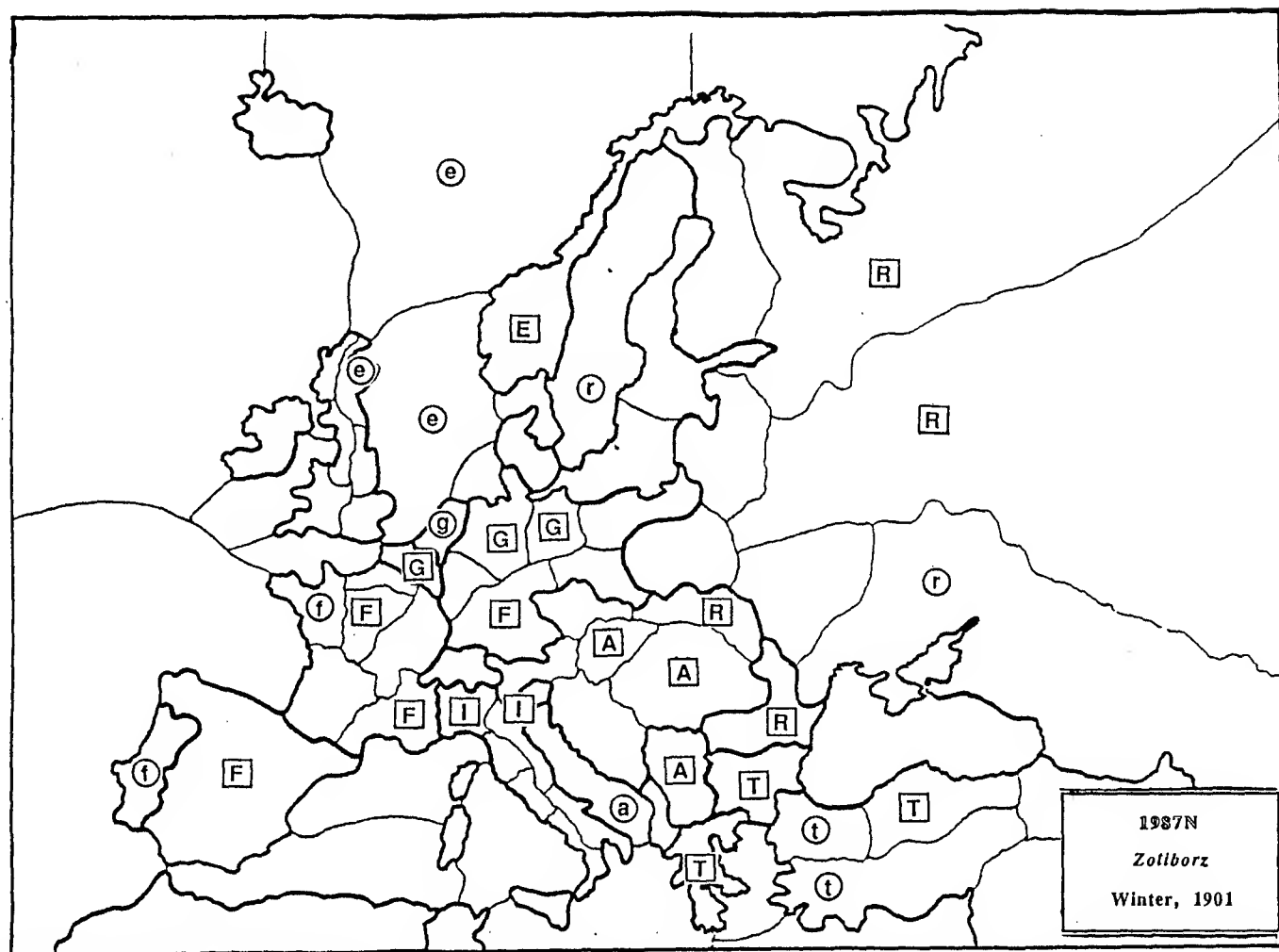
**GERMANY** (*Tighe*) F kie-DEN, A ber-KIE, A mun-RUH.

**ITALY** (*McHugh*) A ven-TYO, A ROM H, F nap-TYN.

**RUSSIA** (*Zarse*) F stp(sc)-BOT, A war-GAL, A mos-UKR, F sev-BLA.

**TURKEY** (*Blaine*) A con-BUL, A smy-ARM, F ank-CON.

map indicates positions for 1987N/Zoliborz



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The deadline for Fall, 1901 is Frlday, March 27th, 1987. Telephoned orders are due by 2PM on that date.

PRESS: Austrla to France: Is your weather eye up?

Claude to Jeff: We're also both on the standby list in TGZ.

Tighe to Zarse: Cute 'zine, now how about a letter?

Church Lady [Tighe] to Claude "The Sllent": Living up to our name, aren't we? Well, isn't that special.

Turkey: In Ankara today, The Sublime Porte announced the planned capture of Bulgaria and Sevastopol in the fall of 1901.

Germany to Italy: That's OK, I think everybody else wanted to wait, too.

Tighe to McHugh: Guess you're right. Having the DH rule only in the American League is like having the AFL play Canadian rules football. I just wish baseball would drop it and retire all those mutant DH's.

Germany to France: Well hello there. I just read this real neat article about how France lets a German fleet take Portugal in Spring '03. Are you interested?... Well, how about Fall '04?...

1987N

Mokotow

Fall, 1901

AUSTRIA (D. Claude Morest, 18 Shady Lane, West Simsbury, CT 06092) A SER S F alb-GRE, F alb-GRE, A tri-VEN.

ENGLAND (Richardson?) NMR! F NTH H, F NWG H, A EDI H.

FRANCE (Melinda Ann Holley, P.O. Box 2793, Huntington, WV 25727) A pic-BEL, A spa-POR, F mid-SPA(SC).

GERMANY (Tighe?) NMR! F DEN H, A KIE H, A RUH H.

ITALY (Jack McHugh, 730 Union Street #6, Allentown, PA 18101) A tyo-VIE, A ROM-tri (imp), F ion-tun (nsu), F TYN H (U).



**RUSSIA** (*Jeff Zarse, 1 N. Stonegate, Lake Forest, IL 60045*) F bot-SWE, A GAL S ITALIAN A tyo-VIE, A ukr-RUM, F bla-CON.

**TURKEY** (*Alan Blaine, 15090 El Capitan Way, Delhi, CA 95315*) A BUL S RUSSIAN A ukr-RUM, A arm-SEV, F con-AEG.

The deadline for Winter, 1901 is **Friday, May 1st, 1987** (telephoned orders due by **2PM**). I ask Ted Davis, 1604 Miles, Kalamazoo, MI 49001 to please stand by for England, and Mike Sargent, P.O. Box 190286, Anchorage, AK 99519 to please stand by for Germany. Note the COA's for Jack McHugh and Jeff Zarse.

## 1987O Supply Center Chart — 1901

AUSTRIA	bud, tri, <u>vie</u> , SER, GRE, VEN.....	5, +2
ENGLAND	lon, edi, lvp.....	3, even
FRANCE	par, bre, mar, SPA, POR, BEL.....	6, +3
GERMANY	ber, mun, kie, DEN.....	4, +1
ITALY	rom, nap, <u>ven</u> , VIE.....	3, even
RUSSIA	mos, stp, war, <u>sev</u> , RUM, SWE, CON.....	6, +2
TURKEY	ank, smy, <u>con</u> , BUL, SEV.....	4, +1

**PRESS:** FRANCE TO AUSTRIA: Weather *eye*? I've got a whole fleet of weather *satellites* up there!

**CLAUDE TO PLAYERS:** I only received one correspondence this turn and it wasn't from any of my neighbors. What's the problem here? At least you could deceive me instead of overtly attacking me.

**FRANCE TO GERMANY:** Might be interested. How about a French fleet in Denmark in F'03?

1987O

Mokotow

Winter, 1901

**AUSTRIA** (*Morest*) Builds A BUD, A TRI. Also has A SER, F GRE, A VEN.

**ENGLAND** (*Davis*) Even. Has F NTH, F NWG, A EDI.

**FRANCE** (*Holley*) Builds A PAR, F BRE, F MAR. Also has A BEL, A POR, F SPA(SC).

**GERMANY** (*Tighe*) Builds A BER. Also has F DEN, A KIE, A RUH.

**ITALY** (*McHugh*) Even. Has A VIE, A ROM, F TYN.

**RUSSIA** (*Zarse*) Builds F STP(NC), A MOS. Also has F SWE, A GAL, A RUM, F CON.

**TURKEY** (*Blaine*) Builds F ANK. Also has A BUL, A SEV, F AEG.

The deadline for Spring, 1902 is **Friday, May 29th, 1987**. Telephoned orders are due by **2PM** on that date.

**PRESS: JEFF TO WHOEVER LIVES IN LONDON:** You've had your shot at Norway—now it's my turn.

**ST. PETE(NC) TO BREST:** Fleets, fleets, fleets. What's an Englishman to do?

**ZARSE TO TIGHE:** Cute 'zine, now how 'bout some moves?

**GERMANY TO WORLD:** Sorry about the blackout, but all my wires were down.

**TIGHE TO GM:** Boy, is my face red!

**GM TO TIGHE:** It would have been even redder than that red M&M had I not been able to get to the post office today to pay the extra 17¢ on *RC* (and your orders).

**ZARSE TO GERYK:** Cute orders, now how 'bout a zine?

**GERMANY TO FRANCE:** My secretary will call your secretary.

**JEFF TO JACK:** Ghod, did you \*!&@# up, Jack!

**SWITZERLAND [TIGHE] TO GERMANY:** Your lights may be on, but is anybody home?

**JEFF TO ALAN:** Lucky-lucky-lucky ... nyah, nyah.

**TIGHE TO GM:** Wimp? Naw. I'm just used to using grey & black press in my other games. I have yet to see anyone abuse a black press game.

**GM TO TIGHE:** Black press itself is an abuse.

**GERMANY TO RUSSIA:** Relax. If I wanted war I'd have built F Ber.

**JEFF TO SULTAN ALAN:** May is "Nuke an Austrian" Month.

1987O

Mokotow

Spring, 1902

AUSTRIA (*Claude Morest, 18 Shady Lane, West Simsbury, CT 06092*) A bud-VIE, A TRI S A bud-VIE, A SER-rom, F gre-ION, A VEN-rom.

ENGLAND (*Ted Davis, 1604 Miles, Kalamazoo, MI 49001*) A edi-YOR, F nwg-NWY, F NTH S F nwg-NWY.

FRANCE (*Melinda Holley, P.O. Box 2793, Huntington, WV 25727*) A par-PIC, A BEL S GERMAN A ruh-HOL, A por-SPA, F spa(sc)-WES, F bre-ENG, F mar-LYO.

GERMANY (*Kevin Tighe, 290 12th St., Arcata, CA 95521*) A ber-SIL, F den-BAL, A kie-DEN, A ruh-HOL.

ITALY (*McHugh?*) *NMR!* A vie h (d.r tyo.boh.gal.otb), A ROM H, F TYN H.

RUSSIA (*Jeff Zarse, 1 N. Stonegate, Lake Forest, IL 60045*) A gal-BUD, A RUM S A gal-BUD, F stp(nc)-BAR, A mos-STP, F SWE-nwy, F con-AEG.

TURKEY (*Alan Blaine, 15090 El Capitan Way, Delhi, CA 95315*) A ser-ukr (imp.nsu), A BUL-ser, F aeg-GRE, F ank-BLA, A SEV H(U).

The deadline for Spring, 1902 is **Friday, July 3rd, 1987**. Telephoned orders are due by 2PM on that date. Would Robert Acheson, P.O. Box 4622 Station SE, Edmonton, Alberta, T6E 2A0 CANADA please standby for Italy? Note the COA for Kevin Tighe.

PRESS: GERMANY TO RUSSIA: Relax—if I wanted war I'd be in Prussia.

SOUTH AFRICA [TIGHE] TO GM: "White press only." "Black press is an abuse." Very glad to see our normal policies are gaining favor elsewhere.

TIGHE TO ZARSE: Cute, cute, now how 'bout some cute?

TED TO JEFF: Now I'm in London, so it's still not your turn!

BERLIN TO LONDON: So what kind of coalition-busting technique are you going to use?

PRUSSIA TO GM: Could you please include your address in the game report? Thanks.

GM TO PRUSSIA: Sure.

TIGHE TO GERYK: And how were Peel & I to know that you don't enjoy working on computers? Huh, huh? (Huff, huff).

GERYK TO TIGHE: It should be obvious.

ENGLAND TO FRANCE: Answer the door, Melinda. I know you're in there.

ENGLAND TO WORLD: A change in administrations in London has inspired the troops and eased the minds of the loyal subjects since they are convinced that their homeland defense is the first priority.

GERMANY TO RUSSIA: Well, maybe I wanted war anyway.

1987O

Mokotow

Fall, 1902

AUSTRIA (*Morest*) A tri-BUD, A VIE S A tri-BUD, A SER S A tri-BUD, A VEN-rom, F ion S ITALIAN A ROM-nap (nso)(d.r adr.apu.eas.tun.otb).

ENGLAND (*Davis*) F NTH-lon, F NWY S RUSSIAN F swe (otm), A yor-WAL.

FRANCE (*Holley*) A PIC-lon, F ENG C A PIC-lon, A BEL S GERMAN A HOL, A SPA H, F lyo-TYN, F WES S F lyo-TYN.

GERMANY (*Tighe*) A den-SWE, F BAL S A den-SWE, A sil-WAR, A HOL H.

ITALY (*McHugh*) F tyn-NAP, A ROM-ven, A tyo-MUN.

RUSSIA (*Zarse*) F swe-den (d.r bot.fin.otb), F bar-NWG, A stp-LVN, A bud-tri (d.r gal.otb), A RUM-ser, F aeg-ION.

TURKEY (*Blaine*) A BUL S RUSSIAN A RUM (otm), F GRE S RUSSIAN F aeg-ION, A sev-UKR, F BLA H.

The deadline for Spring, 1903 is **Friday, July 31st, 1987**. Telephoned orders are due by 11PM the night before. I thank Bob Acheson for submitting standby orders, although I can't say the same about his press. Please take note of the new address—telephone number is the same as the old one. If you want a work number, (312) 702-3224 will work from 1-7PM, weekdays. Don't hesitate to call me at work if you need to (ha!).

## 1987O Supply Center Chart — 1902

AUSTRIA: bud, tri, ser, ven, <u>gre</u> , VIE.....	5, even*
ENGLAND: lon, edi, lvp, NWY.....	4, +1
FRANCE : par, bre, mar, por, spa, bel.....	6, even
GERMANY: ber, kie, den, <u>mun</u> , HOL, SWE, WAR.....	6, +2
ITALY : rom, nap, <u>vie</u> , MUN.....	3, even
RUSSIA : mos, stp, rum, con, <u>war</u> , <u>swe</u> .....	4, -2
TURKEY : ank, smy, bul, sev, GRE.....	5, +1

\*If the dislodged Austrian F ion retreats to Tunis, Austria will be at 6, +1.

PRESS: JEFF TO SULTAN ALAN OF TURKEY: God, I hope you're telling the truth. This turn will be the true test of our alliance.

ZARSE TO TIGHE: You're too cute for your own good. Die!

ZARSE TO TIGHE (II): But then again, if you're not in Warsaw, maybe we can work it out.

ITALY TO GM: Zarse says that a drunken, narcoleptic [*sic*] (Jeff spelled this for me)—is this true? Maybe this explains why you didn't answer the phone for my last turn.

GM TO ITALY: I see that you were so intent on Jeff spelling the word (which he misspelled) that you forgot to finish your sentence. Whatever it was you were trying to say, I deny it.

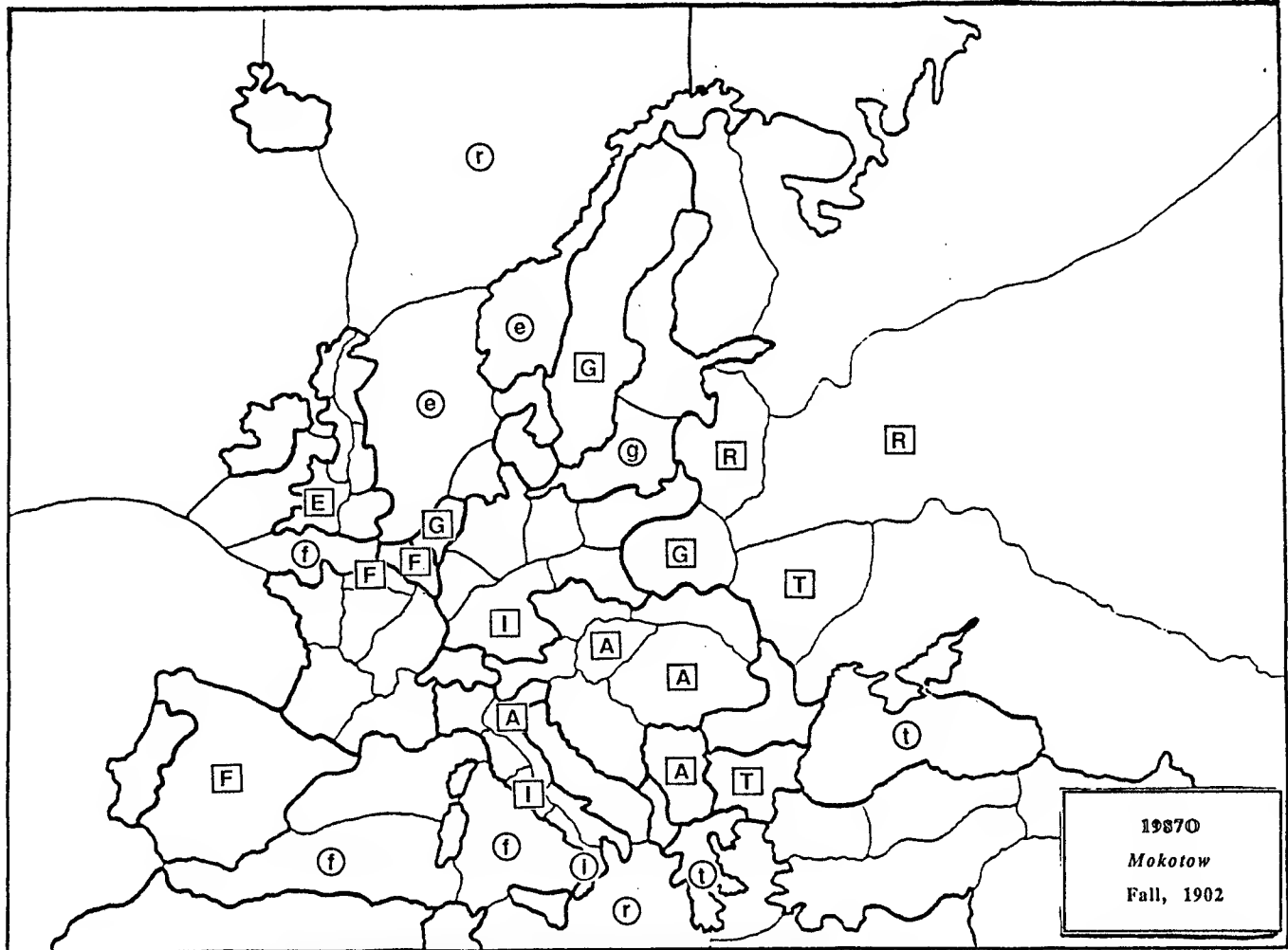
ITALY TO FRANCE: Where's my autographed picture? I know you tried to bribe, yes, Jeff told me that, too.

GM TO MR. MCHUGH: Jack, are you feeling OK?

JACK TO BRUCE: Have you moved again? [*Yes.*] If you don't want me in the game just say so and stop moving around the country trying to avoid my move. (How come you don't put your name on the game flyer, Mr. *BI*?) [*So you can't find me to evict me.*]

BRUCE TO JEFF: Got a real wierd *RT* the other day, pal. You going off the deep end or what?

JEFF TO CLAUDE: God, you're annoying.



## 1987 North American Zine Poll

1. *Costaguana*
2. *Blunt Instruments*
3. *Praxis*
4. *Europa Express*
5. *Diplomacy World*
6. *House of Lords*
7. *Redwood Curtain*
8. *The Canadian Diplomat*
9. *Magus*
10. *Over There*

### 1987 North American GM Poll

1. Andy Lischett
2. Lee Kendter, Sr.
3. Dick Martin
4. Gary Coughlan
5. Jeff Richmond

### 1987 North American Subzine Poll

1. *High Inertia*
2. *Humboldt*
3. *The MegaDiplomat*
4. *Out to Pasture*
5. *Fiat Bellum*

I was immensely surprised by *BI*'s high finish, especially after having not put out an issue for almost the entire period during which the voting took place. *BI* even had the highest modified mean score of all the 'zines rated, losing only in the preference matrix. I'm glad that enough people enjoy the 'zine that *BI* was able to place so high regardless of its hiatus.

Those of you who paid your \$1 for *The Cream Shall Rise*, Bruce Linsey's official Poll publication, already know this, having been treated to 88 pages of Poll results, statistics, opinions, and editorials. The amount of work Bruce put in to *TCSR* must have been enormous, and I'm pleased that the Runestone Poll is in such capable hands. However, the implications of this huge publication rather disturb me. Most of the contents, such as the preference matrix scores, individual 'zine performance reports, and the like, were done carefully and well. Some, however, such as the lifetime scores and Longevity Points, were rather unnecessary. One invention, the "Hobby Health Index", seemed somewhat contrived and quite arbitrary. It scares me that all of this is being taken so seriously. It's nice to report Poll results, but, in the end, who cares? I would hate to think that I am part of a hobby where informal popularity contests are regarded as seriously as Nobel Prize awards. This reinforces a general trend I have found in the hobby where people take things much too seriously, whether it be the games themselves (Michael Hopcroft's comment "If there's anything I take seriously, it's games"), or gross overreaction to gentle ribbing (David Berk's four-alarm letter over the *Random Thought* fake). If you think these *BIs* are large, just think about how much time I have to do them. *TCSR* was compiled in a few short weeks. I question whether any hobby project is worth such an intense effort. Lighten up, guys.

Two footnotes to the Poll this year: Apparently, Dick Martin, publisher of the 'zine *Retaliation*, was involved in publicly soliciting "zero" votes for his 'zine. Dick even went so far as to offer a free issue to anyone who would comply with this request. Furthermore, Dick seemed to go about this childishness with all the glee of a twelve-year-old. Dick has his personal opinion, I'm sure, of both the Poll and the pollster, and I certainly would never deny him the right to hold this opinion or to express it, but to deliberately attempt to manipulate the Poll results is just dumb. For shame, Dick.

Also, Gary Coughlan, the former publisher of *Europa Express*, is quite disturbed that *EE* was ranked in this year's Poll despite the fact that it clearly did not meet the requirements for ranking, which stipulate that a 'zine must be published in the year of the Poll. Gary sent me a copy of a letter which he had sent to Nelson Heintzman, expressing the opinion that a) it damaged the impartiality of the pollster to change a rule in the midst of the voting; b) Gary's notification of *EE*'s fold probably dissuaded many *EE* subbers from voting for the 'zine; the rule was changed *after* some of these subbers might already have sent in ballots, and; c) it is unfair to the rest of the publishers in the hobby who kept publishing year-round. I understand Gary's feelings, and although I feel that Gary's high placing in the Poll is a just reward for all the hard work Gary has put into *EE* over the years, I must agree that *EE* should not have been rated this year.

# THE CON AT WHICH ZARSE NEVER SLEPT

## *Bubbles and Trxie Go to the Big City*

When I was first informed of the date for Dipcon, I noted with glee that it was two weekends after classes ended. This would give me enough time to finish exams, move into my new apartment, and get settled in before going to Madison. As it turned out, the date change put Dipcon squarely in front of exam week—the weekend *before* exams, to be exact. Nevertheless, I decided some time ago that with Dipcon so close, I would be foolish not to take the time out to go. It would simply be an extra incentive for being prepared for exams.

Consequently, I ended up taking most of my finals early in order to lighten my final load as much as possible. This included writing several papers a week before they were due, which must have surprised my professors no end. In any case, by the time Dipcon rolled around, I was raring to go. Since Jeff Zarse and I were going to be driving up and rooming together, Jeff came down to my apartment on Thursday evening so we could get an early start on Friday. Actually, we didn't exactly need an early start to get to the con, since Madison is, at most, a three-hour drive from Chicago. What it was, in fact, was an excuse to play *Titan*.

Jeff arrived around six, and he, my roommate, and I promptly began a three-player *Titan* game. After that, Jeff and I went to visit Steve Clark, a fellow University of Chicago student who was going to be driving us up to Madison. There, we met the legendary Dan Stafford, who is an old friend of Steve's, and sat down to a game from Games Workshop called *Talisman*. My impression of the game, after a marathon six-hour session, was that *Monopoly* and *Dungeons & Dragons* had somehow been combined. Each player is represented by a character, who moves around a series of concentric circles on the board, trying to get to the middle of the inner one so that he can zap everyone else with a series of die rolls. I somehow won, although that didn't seem to mean much, since it all boiled down to beating Steve on four straight rolls of a die. So much for a brilliant demonstration of *Talisman* skill.

We left for Madison around noon on Friday, and arrived at about three, whereupon I had the pleasure of meeting Mark Frueh and Marc Peters. The hall where we were to play looked very nicely set up, with plenty of table space. Rapidly assessing the situation and realizing that we had a few hours to kill, Jeff, Steve, Dan, and I went off to size up Madison. Even now, several days after the con, I still remember Madison as a wonderful town. I didn't have much chance to look around, but the little I saw of it reminded me of New Haven. Seems like a nice place to go to grad school.

After dropping our bags in Lowell Hall (the student dormitory where attendees were being lodged), Jeff, Steve, Dan, and I set out to look for some alcohol. By the time we returned to the Student Union, it was time for the first round of *Diplomacy*, as well as the preliminary round of the *Titan* tournament. I will readily confess that one of the primary reasons for my attending Dipcon was the *Titan* tournament. All told, I have played over a hundred games of that notorious game, and I was ready for some fresh competition. As luck would have it, I drew Jeff Zarse (who, over the course of the spring, had played numerous games of *Titan* with me), as one of my opponents. So much for freshness. Mike Barno rounded out our board. Three-player *Titan*, eh? No sweat.

I began to sweat shortly after Jeff knocked Mike out, which was about two hours into the game. With the strength he gained from those points, Jeff instantly put me on the defensive. I had little chance to recruit, and when I did get a good stack together, the luxury of splitting was often impossible to risk, as was always poised to pounce on my little stacks.

Still, Jeff got reckless, and it nearly cost him the game. Going for a quick kill against a relatively weak group in a Tower, Jeff risked his Titan unnecessarily, and found himself pinned below a wall, with one of my Guardians above him. After counterstriking (and the elimination of several creatures adjacent to his Titan), my Guardian needed only two hits (two fives or sixes) on twelve dice. He rolled only one. On his counterstrike, Jeff eliminated my Guardian and my hopes for winning the game. A very conservative Zarse finished me off at about eleven o'clock, six hours after we had begun.

Never knowing when to quit, Jeff, Mike, Russ Rusnak, and I promptly started another *Titan* game back at Lowell Hall. As usual, I was knocked out early, falling asleep shortly thereafter. I vaguely remember waking up with the sun shining brightly, and Jeff and Russ still rolling dice. I was told later that they had played until nearly eight in the morning, with Russ finally winning.

Saturday found arriving in the middle of the first round of *Diplomacy* and without a *Titan* tournament, so after a few minutes of looking around, Bruce Linsey and I decided to start an *Empire*

*Builder* game, with the understanding that I would leave when the next round of *Diplomacy* started. Jeff, his lack of sleep quite evident from his level of hyperactivity around a *Diplomacy* board, asked to join us since he was about to be eliminated from his game. What followed was a rather slow *EB* game, as Bruce and I had to keep calling Jeff over from his game, whereupon Jeff would come muttering this and that about his opinion of Morgan Gurley's playing skill. All in fun, of course, but still amusing. What Jeff apparently lacked in negotiational skill he made up for over the *EB* board, where he managed to accumulate a large lead before Bruce and I ended up conceding to him. The reason we cut the game short was that I had decided to try just one round of *Diplomacy*. I should have stayed with *EB*.

I am a terrible face-to-face *Diplomacy* player. Unfortunately, I keep ignoring this fact when it comes down to tournament play, and I inevitably embarrass myself. This time was no different from any other. The lineup consisted of Eric Ozog (Austria), Jeff Ellis (England), Barb Fuessel (France), yours truly (Germany), Dave Henning (Italy), Jeff Hoeflicker (Russia), and David Hood (Turkey). Faced with a friendly England and a (very) inexperienced France who seemed willing to cooperate, I decided I could afford to bide my time until 1902, to see how the Scandinavian and Mediterranean situations shaped up. Even though France was a complete novice, I felt that this could be an advantage later, and that knocking France out quickly would not leave me with as many options. Eric Ozog echoed this view, with the added observation that he didn't like to roll over novices at the very beginning, as this tended to "discourage" them. Fine. Mr. Ozog, however, in his haste not to "discourage" Barb, encouraged her to order A Paris-Burgundy with support from A Marseilles. That set the tone for Franco-German relations. I got the feeling throughout the game that Eric was practically writing Barb's orders for her, as she always seemed to do whatever he asked (although it could just have been his smile). In any case, Eric and David rolled over Italy and Russia, with English help in Scandinavia. In the meantime, I butted my head against Burgundy's brick wall, with sporadic help from England. By the time I could convince Jeff Ellis to stay with me for any length of time, Austria had already crossed into Bohemia, Tyrolia, and Silesia, and the game was all but over for me. England ended up taking my centers, and I was history by 1905.

The game left me with a lingering sense of frustration, and I decided to try another round, despite what I had told myself beforehand. The list of players on my board seemed very promising: Alan Stewart (Turkey), Steve Clark (Russia), me (Italy), Scott Drane (Germany), Dan Sellers (France), Dave Henning (England), and Bill Becker (of *K-Zine* fame) as Austria. Alan, Bill, and I immediately set up a Western triple, which prompted an F/G on the other side. England was halfway out before the West even figured out that Bill and I were allied (Bill let me into Trieste in S'01, pretended I had stabbed him, and then allowed me to continue into Serbia in the Fall, which gave the East fifteen centers in 1901). Austria picked up Rumania and Greece, I got Serbia and Tunis, and Turkey got Bulgaria and Sevastopol. 1902 saw the Eastern steamroller bear down on the hastily-composed F/G/R coalition. Steve holed up in Scandinavia, taking Norway and Sweden, and managed to hold onto Moscow and St. Petersburg. After fighting to a stalemate with F/G/R, it became obvious to us that we had to get Steve to stab France and Germany. After several frantic negotiation sessions stretching over a couple of seasons, it was decided: Steve would join us. Unfortunately for me, a parallel stab plan had been concocted by the lying dog coalition of Stewart-Becker, and the ensuing knife cut away all but three Italian centers. After I recovered from my initial shock, I realized that I should have been tipped off several times to what was going on. Sadly, I am quite naïve, and should have expected to lead myself to eventual doom. Consequently, instead of turning to face my former allies, I (to France and Germany's great consternation) pushed a fleet out into the Atlantic and began harrassing the West from the rear. I probably didn't accomplish much, but I certainly boggled Scott Drane's mind. Scott couldn't figure out why I didn't do the honorable thing and defend myself. So much for orthodoxy.

There weren't any new games of anything forming, so I wandered over to an adjacent room to watch Mark Frueh, Marc Peters, James Wall, and Jeff "Mr. Titan" Zarse battle it out for the *Titan* crown. (Jeff, in his inimitable way, had neglected to put his first name on his nametag, preferring more colorful things like "Bubbles" [Friday] and "Trixie" [Saturday morning]. He apparently had donned the "Mr. Titan" tag just prior to the game as a psychological weapon. Nobody seemed particularly concerned.) The game had been in progress for several hours, but this didn't have much visible effect on Jeff, who at this point had been awake for nearly forty straight hours. Things were going slowly, though, so I joined a very spur-of-the-moment Gunboat game with Greg Ellis, David Hood, Dan Stafford, Morgan Gurley, and a person who I only discovered later was Randolph Smyth. Greg Ellis and I, after an initial confrontation as Russia and Turkey (respectively), formed an alliance and proceeded to clean up in the Med. Typically, just as I was about to win something, we had to

quit, as we had to be out of the building by 1AM.

That night brought another game of *Titan*, this time with me, Russ, Steve, and Cathy Ozog battling it out. Once again, we went far into the night, emerging only the next morning. Cathy wisely decided to call it quits at around three, and her place was taken by the indomitable Mr. Zarse who, having just finished *another* game of *Titan* in another room, nonchalantly volunteered to sit in, all the time insisting, "I'm not tired. Really." The hours finally told, however, as Jeff conked out on the floor before he could even get a move completed. So much for "Mr. Titan."

The sun rose with us still playing with those silly cardboard squares. I think Russ won (of course), at which point Steve, Russ, and I decided to get some breakfast. Little did we know, though, that Madison isn't exactly the place to be for early-morning dining. Granted, we went out before seven, but I expected there to be the usual greasy spoon open for business. We ended up going to McDonald's, which was probably worse than not eating breakfast at all. I'm certain that the indigestion I suffered from on the ride home was a direct result of that ill-fated breakfast. Still, I didn't die, and we showed up at Memorial Hall a few minutes after nine (the interim was spent in packing). There, Jeff, Bruce Linsey, and I desperately tried to round up six *Civilization* players. I was facing a dilemma in that I sort of wanted to be home on Sunday in order to check in at work that night (being the manager, I didn't want to stay away the entire weekend), yet I really wanted to play *Civ*, a game which I can never seem to get people interested in, yet is one of my favorites. This time was no different, as people seemed very unwilling to commit themselves to such a long undertaking. After about an hour, I decided to head home with Steve and Dan, leaving Jeff to find yet another player to replace me. Jeff told me later that had I stayed, we would have had just enough people. As it turned out, they were one short of starting when someone said, "Let's play *Junta*?" and everything fell apart. At that point, however, I was already on my way back to Chicago.

As happens at all cons, I think, I regret not having a chance to talk with more people. Too many games are being played, there is too much to do, and inevitably chances are missed that may not come again soon. All I can say is that I enjoyed myself tremendously. In fact, I can hardly wait for Tomatocon this fall. Perhaps there I'll do less playing and more chatting.

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## *Listen up!*

Some of you have complained in the past that *BI* should have more contests. Despite the fact that I think contests are a bunch of hooey, I thought I'd satisfy those of you who have threatened to take drastic action against my life should I fail to include a contest in an issue of *BI*. Fine. Here you go. Identify the following quote.

Within two weeks the little mound was overgrown with burdock and wormwood; wild oats were dancing on i rape was yellowing gaily at the side, clover was raising its head, and the air was scented with thyme, spurge, and honeydew.

Soon afterwards some old man drove out from the village, dug a little hole at the head of the grave, and se up a shrine on a freshly-cut oaken pole. In the shadow beneath the triangular coping appeared the sorrowfu features of the Mother of God, and on the base below her was painted an inscription in Old Slavonic:

In the years of trouble and pother,  
Brothers, judge not your brother.

The old man drove off, leaving the shrine in the steppe to depress the passers-by, to arouse a dumb yearning in their hearts with its everlastingly despondent look.

Later on, in June, two bustards fought around the shrine. They beat out a little bare patch in the blue wormwood, crushing the green flood of ripening speargrass, fighting for the female, for the right to life, love, and fertility. And again after a little while, under the mound, right by the shrine, in the shaggy shelter o the old wormwood, a female bustard laid nine speckled, smoky-blue eggs and sat on them, warming them with her body, protecting them with her glossy wings.

Anyone guessing the work from which this was taken wins \$10 cash (forget the free issues). If you care for a hint, I've just quoted a short passage from one very long and boring trilogy. Nevertheless, it's lit, so ya oughta know it, right? Get sum *kul-chah*!

Probably the last of the discussion on

## HOUSERULES

The Boardman Number Custodian's decision on the War by Automatic Pilot has been made. The result? WAP is regular as long as it is not used for builds or removals. I'm glad this has finally been resolved.

What effect will it have on the games in *BI*? If you recall, my position was that if the rule was irregular, it would be dispensed with. Unfortunately, several NMRs occurred before the decision had been made, and I was faced with the dilemma of either using the rule and hoping it would not cause the game to be declared irregular, and not using it and forfeiting the right to use it again in the game in question. After consulting with the players, the decision was made to play it safe and drop the rule before ever using it. I feel quite comfortable with this, and am just disappointed that the rule will not be playtested immediately. However, Alan Stewart is apparently opening games with this rule in *Praxis* at this very moment, and I'll be eagerly looking forward to the playtest results.

Before we get to the BNC decision (and my commentary), we have a one more houserules-related letter. Take it away, Mark Berch.

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**Mark Berch** That was a good discussion in the HR section on "War by Automatic Pilot" plan. I'd like to respond to some of the specific remarks made.

**To Bill Quinn** You are correct in stating that WAP violates Section XIV.3. But it is quite another matter to state that "then we are not playing *Diplomacy*." The use of standby orders/neutral orders and general orders also violates Section XIV.3, and collectively that covers a *lot* of GMs who permit units dislodged during an NMR to retreat (i.e., almost all GMs) later also violate XIV.3. GMs who use country preference lists (rather than chance) also violate the rulebook. GMs who permit draws that don't include all survivors ("conceded draws") violate the rulebook, and there are others. It's a little late to argue that a violation of the rulebook means we aren't playing *Diplomacy*.

**To Kathy Caruso** You are correct in your example. A W'02 NMR could see an NMRing Italy unable to build (because he didn't build earlier), while in the same season an NMRing Russia can build because he did have builds the previous winter. But this type of inequity can occur in the conventional system. England NMRs, and his removal, dictated by the "furthest from home" rule, removes exactly the unit he would have wanted to remove. Net harm: zero. Italy NMRs, missing one build. Net harm: small. Turkey NMRs, missing three builds. Net harm: great. Yet all three made the same error: they NMRed. At least with the WAP system, there is the *possibility* that all players could end up equal—all whole. With the conventional system, this could not occur. And your phrase, "the GM has built units for the player" is inaccurate. The GM is simply following the player's orders (again). He is not building units and is exercising no discretion.

**To Rod Walker** You made an interesting and constructive comparison to general orders. However, as you are surely aware, for whatever reason, GOs have never caught on. GMs seem to shy away from them. I'd like to give GMs who are unsatisfied with the usual system but unwilling to use GOs another alternative.

**To Rodney Schmisser** You are correct in noting that if Russia knows, or can figure out, that an NMR is coming, he can take advantage of that fact. whereas if another country knew, they might not be able to. But this sort of situation occurs in the regular system as well. Sometimes the knowledge of an upcoming NMR helps the opponent with access to an unguarded supply center, but this doesn't help the player with access to an occupied supply center. Overall, however, WAP tends to strengthen the NMRing position—a unit supported in place in spring will be supported in place in the fall NMR. That will tend to reduce, overall, the advantage neighbors collectively gain (by knowing of the



upcoming NMR) over non-neighbors, and thereby reduce the inequity in the game. It is well understood that NMRs introduce an inequity into the game by creating weaknesses that only neighbors (and not non-neighbors) can exploit. WAP reduces this.

*To Randolph Smyth* Don't fret over the philosophical implications. Just blindly repeat the orders and see what happens. To answer your last question: if F Nth C A Lon-Bel, A Wal-Lon is followed by an NMR, yes, the former A Wal will be given the convoy order. Of course, it won't get in because A Bel blocks the convoy.

*[the rest of this is addressed to me]*

Shifting the subject, I don't agree with your policy of voiding orders because the units were mislabeled (as to F or A) or not labeled. It is my general philosophy that GMs should not *add* requirements not in the rulebook unless there is a compelling reason to do so. There is no such reason here. If a player forgets, or uses "F" for "footsoldier" and "A" for "armada", that is covered by "badly-written order" rule; after all, "War" or "F War" can have only one meaning. In your response to Linsey, you point out that a player may have intended such an order to be deliberate. First, it is not the GM's job to concern himself only with what the player might have intended. Just go by what he wrote down. And second, it's a trap. If you worry that the order is deliberately defective, then you'll never get to use the "badly-written order" rule at all—it might be deliberate in any such case, and thus the BWO rule goes out the window. If a player wants to misorder F Ank-Bla, he can write F "Bla-Ank", or "F Con-Ank", or "F Ank-B", or whatever. Your player who wrote "N" instead of "F" took a risk that his order might be corrected to "F" under the "badly-written order" rule, a risk he didn't have to take because he could just as easily have written "F Ank-B". You should have turned a deaf ear to the player's pleas that the misorder was deliberate. *It could have been a complete pack of lies.* He could have said to himself, "Hmm ... if he corrects it, and I decide that I want it to go, I'll of course say nothing. But if he corrects it, and I decide that, after seeing the results, that I wanted it to fail, I'll make up this story about it being a deliberate misorder." No GM should ever lend any credence to what a player says about his true intent, because there is no way of telling if that is truthful. Just go on what he wrote, not what he claims was in his heart.

The notion of having a GM act "as strictly as possible" is a bottomless pit. There are always more and more rules to be added to get more and more strict. Adding the requirement for F and A is just a start. What about "F Spa-Mid"—nope, you forgot the coast you were leaving from. What about "A Con-Nap, F Ion & Aeg C A Con-Nap"—nope, no separate order for each piece. How about S'01: "A Mun S A Ven-Tyo"? No, the rulebook doesn't require you to state nationality, but if Calhamer was so foolish as to not require superfluous information then there is no reason for me to be. And "F NAt-Mid"? Sorry, but the abbreviation is "NAO", and strict is strict. Besides, it may have been a deliberate misorder.

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### *Boardman Number Custodian Ruling — Steve Heinowski*

I was approached by Bruce Geryk to look at the regularity of his adaption [sic] of Mark Berch's "War by Automatic Pilot", to wit, "Missed Spring or Fall Moves". All units repeat their moves of the previous season ... should a unit have changed positions since that time, the unit will hold ... support for a unit which has changed positions in this manner will no longer be valid, and the supporting unit will hold. Missed Winter builds: a country's build(s) of the previous Winter season will be repeated ...."

Bruce would have employed the standard practice of replacing a player who NMRs consecutively. He will not allow an S'01 turn to be processed without seven sets of orders on file. He has no provision (that I can see) for W'01.

I want to take a few minutes here to explain to the uninitiated just how these things work, at least with me. For any major decision I shall always secure at least one second opinion, (1) just on the outside chance that I have not seen things in their proper perspective, or several opinions if (2) I am having a tough time making a decision in the first

place. Any replies I get are kept in confidence for no other reason than I am not here to start any hobby feuds. When I do finally make a decession [sic], I am afraid you can rant, rave and blow all the wind you want to but you'll have to do so at me alone, and quite frankly I don't give a rat's ... behind. If you are the type that must resort to this type of childish behavior, take it out to the playground where it belongs.

I will try to acquire both sides of any "story", and this may take a lot of time, as people who can competently state opposing views may be few or far between. I do appreciate those people who responded to my inquiries, and just because I do not follow verbatim [sic] what you've written doesn't mean I don't respect your opinion. On the whole I will lean to past BNCs before others, although if I am soliciting a large number of comments I will lean towards general hobby opinions.

Some interesting sidenotes to this investigation/situation: I wondered at those who said that WAP should be allowed because it's innovative and then cit past practice as evidence. I have been threatened that an adverse discission [sic] will cause that person to quit GMing forever. I have been questioned as to why the BNC can rule arbitrarily on irregularity, with definite antagonistic overtones. I have been told certain hobby members want to use this as a platform for to oust support for the current BNC (me), I presume replacing me with one of their own choosing. One of the staunchest supporters of WAP states, "... the security offered by the rule is minimal at best." All this makes me realize why no one has stuck around in this job for any length of time; however ...

Our topic, WAP comes under the heading of "GM interference", and I find there is a lot of confusion as to what this means. Generally, when I say "GM interference", people automatically think of "GM tampering". Tampering, for the uninitiated, means the physical insertion of the GM into a game. There are, however, other ways in which the Gm can interfere without physically moving the pieces. For example, interference can also be the setting up or the creation of a situation that is unfair to a specific person or group of players. A GM could also interfere by violating the rulebook in a manner not necessitated by the postal aspect of play. These latter two are examples of a GM interefering with *a* game of *Diplomacy* as opposed to *the* game of *Diplomacy*.

I would like to thank Bruce for bringing his up, albeit quite reluctantly. It has been a rather quiet term as BNC to date; and this has stirred up quite some controversy. However, this is the preferred way to go, as it is a lot easier to handle problems before they occur rather than after. So let's get on with the meat of the matter.

We are dealing with Rule XIV-3, "Civil Disorder"; and this is one of the most poorly written rules in the book. It is ambiguous. The last sentence, "Players should decide what policies they will follow in this regard in advance of starting the game", leaves one wondering whether it applies to the sentence above or to the whole paragraph; both could be legitimate [sic] interpretations. The key word here is "policies", as opposed to the singular "policy", and of course, then, what is legit—a damn good question. The bad thing here is that a more liberal interpretation could go as far as to say that a GM could write an NMRing player's orders himself to avoid a missed move—"Hey, what the Hell, 'if everyone agrees to it before the game starts ....' This, of course, we know to be pure cow manure! The key, then, becomes where to draw the line, and, once drawn, whether or nor WAP has gone over it.

Let us then analyze WAP: first, by determining what it is not. It is not GM tampering. The GM is not making the moves, period. He is following a prescribed set of orders made by the player; he has not influenced or prejudiced these orders.

It is not an employment of general orders. (General orders are a statement left by the player to attack/ally with Player A, B, C ... with the GM either making the actual moves himself or employing a "local" person to make the moves for the player. With general orders, the player making the actual moves is unknown to the remaining players in the game, enemies and allies alike. Anonymous players, whether by general orders, anonymous standbys, gunboat, or whatever, are not consistent with the concepts of a regular game of *Diplomacy*.) In the case of WAP, though, the players do know who is submitting orders, even if it is by default; and they have, albeit limited, an opportunity to communicate with the player who is making the actual moves.

It is not, in this case, an employment of perpetual orders. (Perpetual orders are a single set of orders that a player submits to be used from that time forward, forever. The employment of perpetual orders is a perversion of the concept of the game of *Diplomacy* having to have "players" (though borderline passable). [?!] A regular game of *Diplomacy*

employs seven players; of course, as the game progresses the "seven" portion of this changes, but the concept of "player" does not. A player is someone who is playing the game; for Ghod's sake, be honest, people—someone who is employing perpetual orders is no longer playing that particular game, period.) In our version of WAP, however, the GM is not permitting the use of perpetuals, as the NMRing player will be replaced in what has to be accepted as the normal procedure for dropping players.

It is not NMR prevention as employment of a collect call list would be. The former seeks to prevent an NMR by having the player of record submit a new orders. WAP, on the other hand, is a reaction to an NMR, nothing more, nothing less.

A finer line must be drawn in the next area: whether WAP represents a legitimate [sic] adaption [sic] of the game to postal play, as neutral 1901 orders are. This is a touchy situation. (Neutral 1901 orders are a series of preordained moves/builds that each country will make in the event the controlling player misses his move. They are made known in advance to all people in the game, and are good only in 1901.) In an ftf game, for which these rules were devised, one should be able to count on the fact that if Player A agrees to play a game he is there physically, a real person, and is actually playing the game. In pbm, however, since there can be quite a time differential between signing up for a game and the actual commencement thereof, this may not be so. So, begrudgingly, BNCs concede [sic] that, at least in 1901, the dropping of a player from a postal game represents a unique circumstance allowing for some adaption [sic]. After 1901, some people still believe that a drop is not a legitimate [sic] part of the postal hobby. Well, for those of you who believe thusly, I have bad news: looking at *Everything* #70 [the official publication of the office of the BNC], which I have before me, only two game finishes did not have a drop: one was a very fast E-mail game, and the other, while lacking a drop, had a resignation. Drops are part of the postal hobby, but drops are also part of the ftf hobby, which is why we have the CD rule in the first place. I have been told that WAP's virtue is that it's non-disruptive, that it preserves the integrity of the game. Well, folks, a missed move is just as much part of the game as "A War-Gal". I can just see the holy terror that would be raised if some GM decided that "A War-Gal" destroyed the integrity of the game, and wouldn't allow it. An NMR is as much part of our game as "A War-Gal" is. Avoiding the NMR is one thing, reacting to it is another. To some degree, WAP falls into this category, but as a convenience, not a virtue.

A good point is made, and I see nothing wrong with a player stating to the GM, "use these orders as preliminaries for the next season", any more than I can judge against him saying "call me collect if you don't get any orders by the deadline". They are conveniences. So, WAP under this guideline squeaks by as OK, since the GM is presuming this (legal) statement for all players in the game.

Another consideration is whether or not it is fair. Is it? Well, let's look at some hypothetical situations: two sets of orders (A Gal-Bud w/S Vie & Rum, and A Ser-Bud w/S Tri). Both players miss in the Fall. Who gets Bud? Was it fair? "Oh," you say, "a bit farfetched." Perhaps, but you'd best have a reason why your system was unfair to give to the player. True, that is a bit farfetched; the odds of even having two missed moves by countries that could conflict are remote; that they should conflict like the above is even more remote. Let's take a look at a more realistic example: Turkey and Italy build one in '01, both gain one supply center, and both miss Winter '02. Turkey builds by WAP, but Italy cannot—his area is already occupied. Was it fair? Or perhaps: Germany built none in 1902, France built two, both gain supply centers in 1903, and both miss Winter '03. Is it fair?

In summation, then:

(1) If you consider WAP to be nothing more than a statement that this season's orders are considered to be preliminaries for the next season, you are OK. (Note that, by definition, this excludes all Winter seasons.)

(2) If you try to squeeze that extra mile out of WAP to interfere in or create an unfair situation in the game, you are not. Games will be noted to that effect.

(3) If you employ WAP without some consideration for Spring, 1901, you are ridiculous.

For those who have helped by responding when called on, I want to say thanks. To that person who said that he would support my decision even if it went against him, my special thanks.

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So ends what I thought was a surprising decision. It surprised me not because of the result of the deliberation, but rather because of the curious phrasing and digression found in the text itself. I was quite amazed that an adult could produce what I felt was, frankly, petty and childish content and construction. Such is the nature of my naïveté.

Much of what I object to can be found in the first few paragraphs. Instead of relying on the accepted authority of his position, he indulges in a series of apparent recriminations which, although mostly implied, serve only to imbue his position with an air of insecurity, and place his objectivity in doubt. I was struck by Steve's and belligerent tone, which made him seem almost irrational in his quickness to answer all manner of charges, either imagined or otherwise, that might result from his decision. Clearly, I was not reading the decision of a confident and unburdened BNC, but instead one which appeared hounded. It was not something which made me confident in the correctness of the ultimate outcome.

Fortunately, Steve's reasoning with regard to the question put any question of his objectivity to rest, and restored much of the faith that I had lost in his ability to make a proper decision. Even though he eventually found that my particular version of WAP (with provisions for Winter builds and removals) is irregular, I am in considerable agreement with his argumentation. What I do disagree with are some of the assumptions he makes in the course of examining the topic. In particular, he makes the statements that "... [some] said WAP should be allowed because it's innovative and then cite past practice as evidence", and "one of the staunchest supporters of WAP states, '... the security offered by the rule is minimal at best'", and expects everyone to be knocked over by the alleged blatant logical contradictions inherent in these positions. Not only did I fail to see the contradictions, but I completely missed the implication of contradiction until several readings later. The fact that a relevant precedent exists does not exclude the possibility of the rule being innovative (some new ground is definitely being broken, even if it has its roots in previous practice), and I can't understand why a person cannot approve of the rule and recognize its minimal protection value. Perhaps the person desires a weak protective system in order to limit its effect to certain situations.

The methodology of the examination was quite correct, even with its digressions. By first relating it to previous practice, Steve showed how the rule differed from existing NMR-prevention rules, thereby eliminating them as possible legitimizers, and at the same time exposing the nature of the rule through a process of elimination. However, I fail to see his point when he delves deeply into the question of neutral 1901 orders. Steve makes the point that, in an ftf game, one can assume that if one agrees to play a power, one can therefore assume that he will actually play, whereas in a pbm game there is some doubt involved. Frankly, I can think of several cases where seven of us agreed to play a game on a certain day, only to have that day arrive and have some people not show up. Even so, this doesn't seem to be related to the point his paragraph tries ultimately to make, which is that drops are part of the postal hobby. The question of 1901 orders seems almost trivial here; Steve would have been much better off focusing on the relation of NMRs to the pbm game rather than engaging in spurious debate such as this. In the same paragraph, he also claims that NMRs are just as much a part of the game as any normal order. I still hold the firm belief that the NMR, while an acceptable and nearly inevitable part of the game, does taint a position, much as injuries in sports tend to taint victories by the opponents of heavily-injured teams. A team without half of its starters might lose, but the reason for the loss is evident to most, and the consideration of these factors *does* enter into account.

Finally, Steve makes the point that "builds are supposed to be the rewards for good play." To extend his argument, one's builds should be disallowed if they are the products of poor play. Not only is this ridiculous, but it is impossible. Yes, one generally wins if one plays well, but if one's negotiations are excellent, one's tactics impeccable, and one's strategy immaculate, one may still lose if three other bumbling players decide to play irrationally and attack one throughout the game. *Diplomacy* is a game where chance can overcome skill.

The substantial part of the decision, however, I find well-reasoned, and support I Steve fully. I only hope that I wasn't the GM who Steve was told would quit GMing upon an unfavorable decision....

# the courier

This installment of the letter column forced me to introduce a rather unpleasant feature—letter-chopping. Not so much that anyone would really notice, but just enough to keep things manageable. I am slowly being won over to the “European” school of letter-editing, which is to chop them up and place them in various departments. The main thing stopping me now is the sheer number of topics addressed in the letters I’ve received, which would make classification nearly impossible. In any case, don’t stop writing. I’ll do my best to print everything I get, though I said before that after the initial rush, there could be no guarantees....

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## Randolph Smyth

Thanks for clearing up my WAP question. I hope it isn’t a complete waste of your space, as other players may have jumped to the same conclusion that I did.

*[It wasn’t a waste at all. In fact, Mike Barno even corrected me on the issue. Bruce Linsey, in a telephone call, agreed with you as well. Perhaps I was mistaken. I gave my interpretation, anyway.]*

However, let me toss a further poser at you, along the same lines. Using a similar scenario: Germany has A Ber and A Ruh, but for some reason he thinks his A Ber is in Mun. His orders are A Mun-Bur, A Ruh S A Mun-Bur; both fail, of course, and meanwhile his unordered A Ber is dislodged ... to Mun, through general orders, GM policy, or what-have-you. The German player is so depressed at screwing up that he NMRs the following season. Not altogether implausible if the houserules allow such an automatic retreat. Now, do the WAP rules succeed? I think you will probably say no, but on what basis? Obviously, the original “A Mun-Bur” was a disorder, but how do you characterize it as the GM? The order cannot be “tied” to any other unit, nor can the unit (originally in Ber) be “tied” to any other order. Indeed, the player may argue that the only logical interpretation is to call “A Mun-Ber” a (very bad) disorder of A Ber, which is rectified in time for the following season, and should succeed.

*[I would allow the order to succeed. The previous (mis)order obviously reflected the player’s intent, which was to have a unit go from Munich to Burgundy. Unfortunately, the order failed because of the fact that the unit in question did not exist. The WAP rules are, in effect, an assumption that if a player does not submit orders, his intent remains the same as in the previous season. Since the intent remains the same, I see no reason to disallow the orders. The fact that the orders can be fulfilled is just an added bonus for the player, who gets his “A Mun” through the kindness of the houserules.]*

Yes, there are ways to get yourself out of this, but you should perhaps make the explanation before starting any games. I still feel the rule is quite workable in practice, but as with any new idea, it should be defined as fully as possible before playtesting.

I should disclaim the implication in Bruce Linsey’s letter that I have “pages and pages” of houserules. That sounds like an indigestible stack of paper. In fact, the longest edition I’ve ever had was five pages, and my current edition is only four (including the CDO Code of Ethics, which is more like an appendix and not written principally by me).

*[You’re cleared of all charges in the matter. Of course there are some who would assert that even four pages of houserules are ridiculous and unnecessary. Not I, of course, not I....]*

*[By the way, who’s running the CDO these days?]*

I’m not aware that Swift’s writings have been labelled “funny”—it’s certainly not the adjective I would use, though I can still appreciate the satire. Similarly with Svejck—but the dust-cover of my book does describe it as “funny”, so I was disappointed when I failed to come across any belly-laughs.

*[If the dust-cover described it as just “funny”, then you should have been tipped off right away. Had it been actually amusing, the dust-cover promotion might have read “... indescribably hilarious ... a masterpiece of wit and satire ...” If one were to take dust-cover comments at face value, one would be inclined to take works of Joan Didion for actual literature. Careful, Randolph.]*

*[By the way, when I turned over the half-sheet of paper that his letter was written on, I discovered the real reason that Randolph wrote. On the reverse was the following:*

To: Crime and Punishment Students

From: Prof. B. Sneideman

March 6, 1987

The class on March 13 is on pornography. Please read the two cases already distributed.

B. Sneideman

March 6, 1987

*[If this isn't a blatant attempt at piquing the curiosity of a Slavic languages student, I don't know what is. All I'd like to know is what pornography has to do with Dostoevskii....]*

### **Mike Barno**

Glad to see you're hoping to come up for Dipcon, UC permitting. Russ mentioned that you might make Lost Weekend here [*in February*]*—too bad you didn't. Thanks for encouraging others to enjoy the con experience. (By the way, I agree: Worldcon yes, Dipcon in Britain no.)*

*Squad Leader?* Yawn. Dip is my postal favorite, though I am also playing Gunboat, United Hockey, United Soccer, 17-Man Anarchy, and now Nuclear Destruction. Face-to-face, I enjoy beer-and-pretzels games (such as at Paul's), card games (especially poker, blackjack, and hearts), and a lot of middle-of-the-road games (as you discussed with Jack McHugh), such as *Warrior Knights*, *Civilization*, *Pax Britannica*, *Junta* (pretty simple, actually), *Grand Imperialism* (haven't played for years) and (begrudgingly) *Titan*. I've played *Dune* three or four times and I hate it. I'd rather play Parker Brothers' *Dune*, almost a kids' game. Tom Swider and Mark Frueh have run it postally, though. (*Machiavelli* has been played postally, too.)

*[What is Warrior Knights?]*

Computers? Nine years' experience with BASIC, plus Pascal, APL, C, dBASEIII, DCL. Never touched a Mac. I've got a DEC Professional 350, but you've probably never heard of it. You don't want to. Powerful, but incompatible with anything this side of a VAX. Can't get software for it, and there's no market for anything I might develop.

I believe you misunderstand the WAP rule. You simply use *the same set of orders*, without taking into account which unit might be in a given space. Thus, in Randolph's example, the adjudication would be: A MUN-bur, A RUH S A MUN-bur, A BER-mun (nso), A BUR H (U). Burgundy is

thus the site of a two-on-two standoff, and the beleaguered garrison remains there. Of course, if the intent of the rule is as you interpret it, then your adjudication is correct. But why? In any other case, the GM considers only the orders and the board position. Let's go back to Mark's letter. Suppose that the player had *sent in* those same orders Randolph listed, but with the season updated. As a GM, you would not—could not—say, "That's not the same A Mun as last time, so the order for 'A Mun' doesn't count." Mark seems to make it clear that his intent was that WAP is simply an automatic repeating of one set of orders in the event of an NMR, to be adjudicated normally.

So Kathy and Bill think that WAP makes a game not *Diplomacy*, because the Rulebook says that all NMRing units hold. May we then assume that the games they GM or play in use 15-minute deadlines, prophetic retreats and builds, and no standbys? Since the Rulebook doesn't require unit types, and the Sample Game allows orders without them to succeed, can we assume that requiring them makes a game irregular?

Having gotten those things said, I find your analysis well-reasoned, and your conclusions closely match my own. I'm glad someone's willing to playtest WAP and get answers to the unresolved questions.

I found the Hungarian essay very enlightening. My roots are from Galicia and Budapest; three of my four grandparents emigrated in the 1890s. My understanding has previously been very limited with respect to postwar political developments. Thanx.

### **Jack McHugh**

You didn't understand *Babbitt*, eh? I think that is somewhat representative of the fact that you weren't born here. What do you think? I thought it was very straightforward and easy to understand. What do you think of Jiri Grusa's *The Questionnaire*? I have a copy but haven't gotten around to reading it yet.

*[Haven't read it, either. By the way, you asked about the novel We in the last issue. I actually had to read it for class this quarter. It is apparently quite an important novel, which is all the more to my embarrassment, since I could remember neither the author nor the content. Yevgenii Zamyatin wrote it, and it is apparently the basis for both Huxley's Brave New World and Orwell's 1984. I didn't care for it, I'm afraid.]*

As for music, I had no idea that OMD had much of a following in the States. You'd never guess by their album sales in *Billboard*, which rarely break into the Top 100. I have known about them for about five years. How about Psychodelic Furs or Alphaville, ever heard of them? *[Of course. The Furs are quite popular. Alphaville are making a name for themselves as well.]* I've been trying to get their latest albums on tape, but unfortunately I can't. (My turntable went on the fritz, thus depriving me of all my albums until I can get it fixed. The depressing part is that it was made in Japan so I can't even send it back to the factory unless I want to wait six months.) As for Springsteen, I liked his early stuff but I can't stand his new Yuppie, Vietnam soulful sound. As for his voice, have you heard that the Ethiopians have taken up a collection? It's to get Springsteen off the USA for Africa album.

I'd also like to protest against all the Soviet bashing that went on in the last issue of *BI*. Hey, Americans can be pretty imperialistic, ask the Indians or Nicaraguans about that. I also take issue with Rod Walker's statement that "Soviet foreign policy differs not so much as an iota from Tsarist foreign policy." I believe that one can say the same about US foreign policy. Look at the world from their point of view. We virtually ring the USSR with military bases from Norway to South Korea and we have conventional and nuclear forces literally minutes from the Soviets' borders. How would the US react to Soviet missiles in Mexico or carriers in the Carribean? Yet we have missiles in West Germany, twelve minutes from the Politburo and Moscow and carriers stationed in the Persian Gulf, twenty minutes away from the USSR's borders. And we call them paranoid?

Now here comes President Reagan with SDI. How does it look from a Soviet point of view? The Soviets have spent twenty years (and a lot of time and energy) building up to parity with the US in nuclear weapons, and now we propose to take all that away by making their forces obsolete with no guarantees that we won't build up even if they got rid of theirs. Additionally, the US is constantly going on about the vaunted Soviet conventional superiority, and even the supposedly "liberal" media buys this Pentagon propaganda. The Soviets have less than a two-to-one superiority in Europe and always will, unless you play games with mobilization schedules (à la Weinberger and his charts: "And here, Senator, you can see the Soviets will outnumber us ten to one on M+10 days....") or the Soviets



make significant draw-downs of their forces facing China and other theaters outside Europe (which we couldn't possibly fail to spot!). Of course, if you look real hard you can play numbers with tanks, artillery, etc., but only an amateur worries only about numbers.

*[But only a fool ignores them completely. Mobilization schedules are an important indicator of the pressure the Soviets will be able to apply at a particular point, such as at Fulda or the Hof Gap. Reforger will do the US no good if the Soviets have overrun the Reforger sites by the time the airlifted units are due to start arriving. A significant NATO weakness is the heavy reliance on reserves, which assumes that the Western intelligence network will be able to obtain ample warning of any Warsaw Pact attack. After the colossal US blunders in Moscow, I can't understand why so many people persist in this belief.]*

Before you brand me a fifth columnist, I would like to state that I do not approve of Soviet foreign policy and they bring on many of their own problems, but many of the barbs that you, Bruce, and some of your readers direct against the Soviets can be said about America and her foreign policy. In many ways, especially regarding the Third World, America is much more arrogant than the Soviets. We condemn any attempt at socialism as communist, whether it is or not, and support the ruling classes virtually till the bitter end. Then we have the nerve to act shocked when the new governments dislike us. Socialism will always have more attraction than capitalism for the Third World. Why? Most Third World nations are too poor to be able to afford the inequities of capitalism. For example, one percent of all people in this country control one-third of all the personal wealth. However, there is enough left over for the rest of us to live on because the country is so rich. Most Third World governments simply cannot afford that type of misdistribution and not be toppled by a revolution or avoid running a brutal police state. The road to democracy for them must involve some sort of socialist redistribution of the wealth. Until this country realizes this we will always have poor relations with any Third World countries run by US lackeys.

I also take issue with your definition of what constitutes the current Polish state. I doubt that anyone, including the Ukrainians, except the Poles, would consider the Ukraine as belonging to Poland. Additionally, I doubt that many Belorussians would consider themselves Polish. Your nationalism is showing, Bruce! Perhaps these were, in fact I know they were, part of Poland once, but they are no more Polish now than East Prussia is German. During the Russo-Polish War of 1919-20 both the Ukraine and Belorussia expressed a desire to be independent of both Poland and Russia. I'm also a little surprised that you didn't mention the Poles' historical partners, the Lithuanians, as part of your ideal Polish state.

*[I really had to hunt through the last letter column after reading this paragraph, Jack, as I frankly had no idea of what you were referring to. If you reacted to my paragraph answering Paul Mills, which I suspect you did, then you not only put a lot of words and ideas in my mouth, but also completely misinterpreted the gist of the entire thing. My references to historical Polish possessions were intended only to give some idea of Poland's previous power in Europe, and thus hint as to the source of the long-standing enmity between Poles and Russians (power). I don't see anything which might have implied that I considered that previously Polish territory to still be Polish. Certainly, cultural and demographic factors defy any attempts to integrate those areas within a sovereign power's empire. I never suggested anything else. I said what I said as a statement of historical fact; any connection with the present was purely imagined on your part. You must have been reading a different letter column.]*

*[As for the Lithuanians, I don't see what their mention would have contributed to the paragraph in question, since you seem to be asking for detail in a situation where I just skimmed over the barest facts. I will point out, however, that the Polish-Lithuanian union of 1386 was an incredible example of cultural compatibility. The nation was, in fact, Polonized (especially the Lithuanian gentry) to the point where the entire nation became (for centuries) essentially Polish. In spite of this, there were absolutely no national disturbances on the part of the Lithuanians. While one could never refer to the Poland/Lithuania of the time simply as "Lithuania", one can rather easily get away with calling it "Poland". Such was the nature of the transformation.]*

Hungary and Poland both share a lot of responsibility for their involvement in World War II. I'm surprised you weren't harder on both, especially Hungary. First of all, let me say that I enjoyed your article immensely and thought it was well-written. Tell me, was it a paper for school? *[No.]* If it wasn't you should consider making it one. Let me fill in some of the things you skimmed over in the early part of the article. There is no question that Hungary was beset by many forces beyond her



leaders' control, but most of these Balkan nations just ran for cover and made no attempt to stand up to Hitler. Nor did they show much interest in trying to attract a protector, like Mussolini, by cooperating among themselves. Instead of playing the Great Powers off against each other, they allowed themselves to be made dupes of the Great Powers. They chose to press their rather parochial claims against each other.

These claims came to fruition for Hungary at the Vienna "Awards" arranged by the Germans and Italians in the late summer/early fall of 1940. Over 50,000 square miles of territory was awarded to Hungary at the expense of Rumania, causing the fall of the Rumanian Monarchy and the rise of the Iron Guard (the Rumanian Nazis), but that's another story. The point is that both Poland and Hungary took the easy way out whenever they could before World War II. Both, for example, took part in the dismembering of Czechoslovakia. Were they really surprised when there was no longer anyone left when their turn came?

*[If you'd specifically care to discuss the tightrope-walking of Polish interwar relations, both with the Soviets and with Germany, I'll be glad to do so. I find your generalizations unjustified in that Poland certainly did attempt to form an East-Central European political bloc in order to resist the Russians. The efforts of Poland and Rumania (her closest ally here) in this field broke down due more to French machinations than to any defects in Pilsudski's strategy. What are you talking about?]*

*As for its being a paper, a piece like that would probably have been discarded in any class here. What I wrote was really a summary of events, with little interpretation, no relation to relevant theoretical literature, and no intent in this direction. I could never get away with that in class.]*

I'm also surprised that you failed to mention the US's part, or lack thereof, in the Hungarian tragedy. We helped inflame the Hungarians by telling them we'd drop the 101st Airborne in as soon as they rebelled and threw the Russians out. This served only to raise false hopes. Even today the Right in this country continues to talk of "rolling back communism," although, of course, they never discuss how they are planning to do this. They don't because they know this would mean war with the Soviet Union and the American people would never go along. Don't you find this an injustice to the peoples of Eastern Europe-- to encourage them that someday America will save them, when in fact we have no intention of doing it? It is all well and good to rally against the Russians being in Eastern Europe, but it is no substitute for a realistic policy. I feel sorry for those poor souls in Eastern Europe who mistakenly believe that America's anti-communism means that we will someday try to liberate Eastern Europe.

*[You also seem to be rather naïve in believing that East Europeans actually hold such hopes. You might be very surprised to know that most have a very realistic attitude towards the immediate and more distant futures of their countries. Although there might once have been some small hopes of relief from the West, nobody expects American and British tanks on the streets of Warsaw. Those who still hope for anything (and that number is getting smaller and smaller) realistically place their hopes in the disaffection of the Soviet youth. This is part of the reason that Gorbachev is seen as being no less sinister than Brezhnev or Khrushchev: his reforms are viewed as devices to lure the disaffected populace back to the Party. This, though, is another matter. As for your "101st Airborne" comment, you exaggerate. I don't believe that such statements were made directly to the Hungarian public, even by the usually-inflammatory Radio Free Europe. Such sentiments may have existed, but I doubt whether this was actually said.]*

*[Lastly, I don't understand why you are surprised at my omission of the US' role, given that the article in question did not go far enough chronologically to the point where US behaviour became a factor. Wait, and I'll get there!]*

As for Soviet foreign policy in general, the more I see of Gorbachev, the more I feel like this is a repeat of the Soviet miniseries, "Khrushchev". Gorbachev has even halted the faltering effort to rehabilitate Stalin that was begun under Chernenko. Gorbachev has been trying to cut the immense overseas burdens (read "allies" in Soviet parlance), ever since his first day in office. A few he has been forced into keeping or even increasing, as in the case of Vietnam, but most new requests he has successfully fobbed off. Most of the Soviets' allies he has been forced into keeping although he's been able to keep the spending they receive down to a tolerable level.

Many people have said that Gorbachev will be a challenge to the US because he will be more activist. I doubt that this will be true in foreign affairs, although it will probably be true in domestic affairs. Gorbachev will most likely be more of a challenge to the Party bureaucracy inside the Soviet Union than to any regime outside of it. Why? Gorbachev is trying to reform the Soviet economy, not

increase Soviet power abroad. Thus he will be more concerned with increasing the resources available to the Soviet economy, mostly at the expense of the armed forces and Soviet allies overseas. The question is just how far he can go in this regard.

*[Not far, if the signs are at all accurate. His failure to remove the Ukrainian Party boss demonstrates that he has far from enough power to be able to establish himself adequately in order to make his planned changes. There is a tremendous inertia in the Soviet Party, and the forcible resistance to change can be nearly impossible to overcome. The postponement of his trip to Czechoslovakia is another indication that he may not have things in hand at home. I'm really skeptical at this point.]*

How did I get on this soapbox? Oh well, I guess I'll stop now—hope you don't mind. Let me know what your reaction is, Bruce (I'm sure I won't be disappointed in that regard!). Keep up the good work!

### **Paul Mills**

What do you mean, my "KGB fears" are a joke? Why, the weekend following the mailing of your zeen I had to write four letters (three of them lengthy), study for an English objective/essay exam, write an essay on *The Great Gatsby*, study for a test in chemistry, and watch "Emmanuelle IV". Now tell me those fears were unfounded!

Sorry about that [*no problem*]; my humor can be painful at times, as I'm certain Dick Martin can attest to. However, you're going to be forced to hear it, but I will make an effort to limit its frequency.

Regarding the "Little Father" comment, let me clarify. I was attempting to get across a notion I had read in some long-forgotten book that communism may be viewed as a new religion, with the "Little Father" (the General Secretary) as the defender of the faith.

Perhaps you are right about the hatred concept. Anger is a more appropriate word. The anger is tempered occasionally when I consider what they as a nation have been through, but it remains.

In multi-player games, have you ever looked at *Supremacy*? Personally, I've has only so-so experiences with it, but I attribute them to the fact that we had only three players, not the full complement. If you haven't seen it, it's really a pricey (\$38) version of *Risk*, with ships, economics of a limited nature, and nukes added. There's nothing quite like the feeling of plunking down mushroom clouds on your enemy's territories.

*[Haven't seen it. I'm still looking for a (used) copy of Yaquinto's Ultimatum. Have any leads?]*

Well, that's all I have time for. I'm off to watch a stimulating hour of TV, I guess. I must talk politics one of these days.

### **Linda Courtemanche**

I just finished reading *BI* #3, and it was a real luxury for me to be able to read it all at my own pace on a beautiful 70-degree Sunday afternoon. I sipped it slowly and enjoyed, like a rich chocolate shake.

Don't worry about your summer shift from your Mac to your Olivetti! Your sheer command of the language and your typing ability will easily keep *BI* a top-quality product, computer or no computer. However, for you to (a) keep *BI* at a reasonable price, and (b) free yourself enough time to really plunge into your summer course, I would suggest you think about making your summer issues "bare-bones" issues. If you let your readers know in advance what you're planning, you won't have to worry about dozens of moldy letters by Labor Day. What do you think?

*[Bare-bones issues are the antithesis of this 'zine. I would prefer not to put anything out at all rather than send out game results only. In any case, this is all academic now.]*

Thanks for the description of AGTfOS. It does sound like a riot! Next time I get to our local Compleat Strategist, I'll ask about it.

Your article on postwar Hungary was tremendous! You have the rare and wonderful talent of bringing history to life with clarity and immediacy. Reading the article was an unforgettable learning experience, and I look forward to your upcoming "Thirteen Days" piece. By the way, I'll quickly mention a fantastic book about American history from 1932-72, *The Glory and the Dream*, by William Manchester. (Actually, it's a two-volume set.) Manchester has an enviable gift for making

complicated events accessible—much like your own gift.

(Uh-oh, this looks like another “kindest letter” nominee. I’d better dredge up something nasty to say about you!)

Did you ever hear the final ruling from the BNC about your WAP policy? Just curious! The letters about that were quite interesting. Funny how rules for a game can turn into such a deadly serious debate....

(I’m still trying to think of cruel attacks to make against your character....)

No other comments now, except that **BI** continues to be an amazing zine, especially with the letter-column response, and I’ll see you here (same zine, same time, same channel) next month!

P.S. Aha, just thought of a scathing, not-nice thing to say about you: *you don’t number your pages!!!*

### **Steve Langley**

Don’t worry about outside commentary on how zines should be run. If all zines were identical life in Dipdom would be dull indeed. Some of us publish warehouse, some publish variants, some publish chat, some publish other. (I put you somewhere between chat and other, my two favorite categories.) You have shown that you can publish. Go ahead and do it!

One last thought on the Auto-Pilot houserule and then I will shut up. I feel that houserules should not affect play vis-à-vis negotiation and strategy. The Auto-Pilot houserule gives the player one more consideration when deciding to change alliances. It could very well be the consideration to tip the scales against the change: “Gee, I’d like to go with Turkey against Austria, but if he [*Who? Turkey, I assume.*] should NMR, his last season’s orders would destroy me ... maybe I’d better keep on as I am.” That may never happen, but if it should happen only once, the houserule would, in my opinion, be wrong.

*[I don’t think your example does anything for your case. While you claim that this would be an instance where considerations are added, your example seems only to substitute one consideration for another. As a counterexample, one can take the situation you pose without the WAP rule, and say “Gee, I’d like to go with Turkey against Austria. In fact, should Austria NMR, we will destroy him.” With the new rule, all that happens in such situations is that the primary concern becomes the former enemy, not the former ally. One concern is substituted for another. Who is to say that the first case is proper, and the second is not? One of the fundamental arguments I have with opponents of the rule is that they assume that things that have nothing to do with the inherent composition of the game are fundamental to regularity. Why drop a player after two consecutive NMRS? Convention, pure convention. A primary property of conventions is that they have no sound logical basis. Consequently, why object to changes?]*

### **Rod Walker**

I hope my responses will be brief this time. Mostly, I suppose, we have the matter of your ruling in 1985AQ. Your response here isn’t too helpful. Let’s assume, for the moment, that I *have* failed to apply the “badly-written order rule” correctly once in my own HRs. That hardly invalidates the rule, and I am still of the opinion that it applies very much in this case. Furthermore, you have overlooked the *much* more important fact that the Rulebook itself shows that it’s not necessary to write “A” or “F” for every unit. I see no reason to deviate from the published rules in postal play, *except* where the peculiarities of postal play make this necessary and/or where the Rules themselves don’t make a definitive statement. I agree with you that it’s *better* if players are careful to indicate “A” or “F” for each unit—it’s neater—but it’s not required by the Rules. I am still firmly of the opinion that you should reverse the ruling.

*[A reversal of the ruling is out of the question; once I have ruled and the period for protest has passed (which it did, without any word from the affected party), the ruling stands. I am more than willing, however, to consider a different ruling in future cases.]*

Let’s go back, however, to my requirement that a support order indicate the nationality of the unit being supported, when it’s different. The Rulebook at least seems to require this, where it gives an example of support orders: “Thus, A Tyr-Mun, A Bur S A Tyr-Mun; or for units of another country,

A Sil S RUSSIAN A War-Pru" (IX.1). Furthermore, the Rules are consistent in using this format whenever international support or convoy orders are shown. This would, then, seem to be a Rulebook requirement. Your point that the omission constitutes a badly-written order, rather than an illegal one (my original interpretation) is not badly taken at all. I'll have to think about it. Since I don't run any games at the moment, the question is academic, though.

In the 1985AQ situation, however, I believe you're definitely in the wrong, regardless of what tack you take. If you're "strict", then you have to accept the Rulebook's own practice, which is definitely to accept orders without unit designations. If you're "lenient", then you have to observe the "badly-written order rule" (which seems to me to be incumbent on a "strict" GM, as well). You can't argue that this ruling is a necessary adaptation of the ftf rules to the exigencies of postal play, and you can't say you're enforcing something required by the Rules as they stand. And, from the point of view of Rule VII.4, you're the one violating the Rules, not the player. I urge you to reconsider.

*[I have. Please see the revised houserules.]*

Your response to my comment about how Penderecki will be regarded a century from now was, "We'll see." I sort of doubt that. I think I can predict, however, that "greatest composer of the 20th Century" isn't one title he'll get. Stravinsky has that pretty much sewed up, just as Beethoven has got it for the 19th and Mozart & Bach sort of splitting honors for the 18th. But this "greatest composer of the century" title is not really a fair one, since each century contains several towering musical personalities. The question is whether Penderecki will be among them. My limited exposure to his music tells me he won't, but as you say, who can tell?

*[Not I, that's for sure. The question is not really one of how Penderecki will be regarded any set number of years from now, but whether his musical presence will eventually become established. Bach was basically forgotten after his death until Mendelssohn rediscovered him. Penderecki may very well be forgotten after he dies. My bet is that he will be revived some years later. You're right, though—we may never know.]*

Of Penderecki's music, I've heard the Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima, the Passion According to St. Luke, and probably a couple of other things equally forgettable. The Threnody, when it isn't being screechy and annoying, tends to lapse into something which I'm sure the composer intends for solemnity and significance, but turns out to be mostly blandness below the treble clef. Everybody is supposed to be terribly moved by the subject, I suppose, but in fact it's the piece itself that's the bomb. The St. Luke Passion seems hardly different, and it goes on longer. But then, I've never heard a Passion that I liked. Much as I adore Bach's music, the St. Matthew Passion strikes me mostly as endless. I can't imagine how the man who wrote the B-Minor Mass could turn out this piece of long-winded pomposity. Yet the professionals think it's wonderful. You can hear the reviewers waxing poetic about it, even over the general snoring. So maybe the St. Luke Passion isn't a fair sample of Penderecki. What would you suggest? Possibly we can trade a tape or two, and you can sample a bit more of Tubin.

Speaking of whom: that LP you have is on CD, and there's also one of his 5th Symphony and excerpts from a ballet. I've considered buying one or both of those one of these days, although at this point I don't want to overload my collection with one composer. I went overboard on the Vaughan Williams and Sibelius (three each), but I'm trying to keep the CD collection diverse—although oddly, at the present, I have virtually nothing in it written before 1800, and *no* Mozart, if you can believe that. Pure accident.

Chopin: Yes, sentimentality; that's it. Yech. I don't care for it in poetry and I don't much like it in music, either. There's a difference between emotion, or even sentiment, and sentimentality, the Victorian habit of burying everything in lace (literally and figuratively). It's often a fine line, and hard to tell when you've crossed it. An extreme form is kitsch. I'd say that Chopin avoided being kitschy, *[I should say!]* although sometimes not by very much. At least we agree about his Piano Concerto #1 (which actually came after his second, as you know). It is his best work, or close to it. One can argue about Krakowiak and the "Black-Key Etude", for instance, not to mention the 2nd Piano Sonata and the G Minor Trio (which has some striking moments). And the scherzi and the ballades, which are rather more virile than some of his shorter things. Hmmm ... I've been playing Wagner all weekend and apparently I'm about due for wanting a change in sonic diet. I hear Mickey Rooney is bringing back "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum." He can never replace Zero Mostel, of course, but I *do* hope they make a recording.

*[I still cry when I hear the Piano Concerto #1. I remember a beautiful performance I heard in*

*Warsaw's Lazienki Park some years ago. Amazing.]*

Meanwhile, the novel is going great guns. After numerous false starts I'm now about 25K words into a very satisfactory version (should end up being about 150K words). The title seems to have been fixed at "A Death in Jerusalem" unless something awfully much better occurs to me. That's a key phrase in the Prologue and again in Chapter 4, so that's likely to be it. I'm trying to do 10-20K words a month and at that rate could have the draft done by the end of this year. If I'm very lucky, and find a publisher right away, it could see print in the fall of '88 or the spring of '89. Then I pray for Jerry Falwell to denounce it on nationwide television. I was originally hoping for Oral Roberts, but the way things are going with him, if he denounces it, nobody will believe there is such a book. Oh well; what can you expect from funnymentalists?

By Jove, I think that's it. I can see why you're calling them "Blunt Instruments", though. You could be somebody with one of these....

## **Fred Chang**

I am now the proud owner of an Atlantic Computer XT. It was made in Taiwan, and this is an example of actions-change-outlook. I have always been opposed to the stupidity of Nationalist China, a bunch of old farts claiming that their sovereignty extended beyond the confines of their island province. Such a pretension has always been preposterous, never mind that the US, in its irrational fear of anything different than its liberty-spewing capitalism, supported it. (But then, this is the usual head-in-the sand tendency of the US, which is similar to the reasoning that brought us late into the last two world wars: ignore anything new that doesn't affect us, as if ignoring a part of the ecosystem would make it disappear.)

I hated to support anything of such a regime, as I saw it. But now I see the island of Formosa as one where the old fogies are tenaciously hanging on to their power while the younger people are tired of their rule.

I bought the computer because it was sold by a friendly salesman. I got a good deal: with a one-year warranty, sufficient software, an XT-compatible with 640K, a modem, a 20MB hard disk, an amber monitor, and a printer. I am really pleased with the system. For a fraction of what I'd have to pay for Big Blue.

I think it's sort of funny that you are studying Russian of your own free will. I understand that it's necessary in your field of study, but it seems that many in Poland really detest the language. While I was in the train station in Gdansk, my friend pointed out a Russian man in front of him in line. This man spoke terrible Polish as he didn't want anyone to know he was Russian (which, as I gather, most if not all Poles speak, but don't like to admit that they do). Interesting.

*[You're not the only one who finds it strange. I still haven't been able to admit to my friends in Poland that I'm studying Russian at college here. It would be terribly embarrassing. Probably the only way I could get away with it would be to convince them that the only reason I'm studying Russian is so that I am better able to inflict damage once the CIA sends me off to spy on the Soviets (or something equally silly). It is, unfortunately, a fact of life that a degree in Russian Language & Literature is much more useful than a degree in Polish or Czech Language & Literature. The State Department is much more responsive to this, and in any case my Polish fluency is an asset in this field whether I have a degree or not. Besides, no one can deny that Russian literature is one of the most beautiful in the world. Poles have too often done themselves an injustice by rejecting it simply because of its origin. Near the turn of the century (1880-90), about the time of the Young Poland movement, Russian literature was, in a sense, discovered by the Poles, who found, to their amazement, that Russians could really write. Writers like Turgenev and Tolstoi had always been known there, but the realization of the wealth of Russian letters came as quite a surprise to a people used to dismissing anything Russian as the product of Mongol barbarism.]*

*[In the academic field, the Russian degree is much more separate from a degree in other Slavic languages, although it is still more useful. The only hitch here lies in the fact that for any sort of career in academia, one must have a Ph.D. Not only that, but the competition in Slavic languages is so fierce that one must really be at the top of his field to get anywhere (which is really true of all the disciplines).]*

*[In any case, I am starting to rethink the Russian degree to some extent. My desire has always been to get a PhD in physics, but I have never felt I had the necessary capabilities in the field. I am*

*starting to believe that this is partially or mostly due to my own insecurities, although I wonder whether linear algebra and analysis in  $R^n$  might get the best of me one of these days. I am really fascinated by physics, though, and wouldn't mind the extra effort involved (Russian in a little too easy for me) to study something which I think makes a difference. The PhD is essential. One can get any number of technician- or government regulatory-type jobs with an MA (basically non-intellectual work), but the best minds working on the leading edge of the field are those who did their docs at the best universities. This university does most of its research at Fermilab, which is a prime example of where physicists go when they've "made it". Part of my reluctance can perhaps be traced to intimidation: how can one aspire to be a physicist when one lives under the shadow of tomorrow's Nobel Prize winners?]*

The lines in Poland really weren't that terrible. They were kind of fun at times, and not nearly as long as I had expected. The worst line was at the Lot [*Polish national airline*] office in Gdansk where everyone sat down because the attendants were incredibly slow (and snotty). My friend explained that any job that had contact with the West was considered desirable, so the people with such jobs would acquire the corresponding "attitude," as we say here in California, so people would sit down. New people didn't realize that all the sitting ones were waiting in line and would immediately rush to the counter. It was weird to use my credit card at this place and be charged in US dollars. It was even weirder that the roundtrip Berlin-Warsaw-Berlin was nearly \$600, while from Warsaw-Berlin was only \$99.

From this trip I was surprised to realize that many Poles seem to like the US (very much) and Reagan. I had to be very quiet about being a Democrat and viciously anti-Gipper. When I first arrived in Warsaw, my friend met me and we took a cab to his place. He argued with the driver who wanted a higher fare when he learned I was an American, and said I was a friend—he was not going to get any money out of it. He quietly explained that the driver and the other passenger (taxis were taking as many passengers as possible as it was after midnight, raining, and people were desperate) spoke of how they liked Reagan since he was anti-communist.

Since this trip was made while Chernobyl was still on everyone's minds (in fact, people at work thought this was a good reason for me to cancel my trip—also with the Libyan bombing having recently occurred), my friend asked me to bring some powdered milk (from West Berlin) for his sister, who was pregnant. My friend Piotr's family told me the joke that, "*Socializm promieniuje na zachod.*" Socialism radiates in the West.

I wish I had gone to the park on Sunday where the black market is held. I thought the Pewex stores were quite a concession on the government's part. Creating a store that accepted only Western currency that anyone with such could go to. Even though most citizens aren't supposed to have any, if they did, they could spend it here so the hard currency would end up in the hands of the government. I went to one and bought some perfume for Piotr's mom (from France) and a bar of soap (from Germany). No one batted an eye when I paid in American currency, and I received change the same way. It all seemed very surreal.

## **Geoff Challenger**

Many thanks for *BI* 1-3. Thankfully your enthusiasm seems to have achieved a trade which I'd intended to take up myself for "some time." Like most "some time" things, I'd just not got round to putting the wheels in motion. Why? Well....

*Home* [... of the Brave, Geoff's 'zine, which won the UK Zine Poll this year] is now up to issue 67. A copy of the last issue (+*Home* 65) is in a separate envelope, possibly on the same plane as this aëroletter. (Have USPS given up on aëroletters? I never see them from the US these days.) Hope you like it. The only thing is that after six years of publishing, each issue is an effort, and I never seem to get around to ambitious things like running off extras and sending them 'round. I cut trades with Gary Coughlan's *EE* a few months back because I wanted to try and sample different parts of the US hobby, and he commended *BI* and *Over There* as being the "best new" 'zines. I meant to set up a trade then.

*[I'm glad you did! They took a while in the mail, but it was well worth it. I'm delighted to trade!*

*[Also, you'll note that aërograms are still available for 36¢ (8¢ less than a one-page airmail letter in an envelope), as you should have received one by now mentioning the apparent disappearance of the Homes (now found). I have no idea why you don't see any from the States. I send them to Poland*



*all the time. They're so convenient.]*

**BI** would earn itself a much more detailed comment if I actually had time to sit down and read it. It certainly looks worthy of serious study (especially the bit on the Hungarian uprising) and I intend doing just that—soon. I have this notion that everyone has this blind spot in their historical education dating from the point where school-based history stops, but before they became aware of political events. Obviously that depends on your age. In my case at 29 my blank era is 1948-1966. So I'm sketchy on the formation of Israel, hazy on Korea, and entirely ignorant about the Bay of Pigs. I don't remember Kennedy's assassination, but I do remember the Six-Day War. The Prague Spring? Hazy apart from the image of the flower and the tank. Hungary? A closed book, guv.

I guess someday people now aged twelve will only have the sketchiest ideas about Polish Solidarity, the invasion of Afghanistan, and our deplorable little Falklands skirmish. Keep the information coming.

I am of course in solid support of Biggles [*Simon Billenness*] and his letter-chopping. Frankly, it does no favors to the area of argument to have to hunt all over the place for ingredients and viewpoints. It's a little like printing a person's orders for their three games all together instead of under the individual games. We (the two halves of this transatlantic hobby) seem unable to agree on this, though, and I guess no-one's going to be convinced either way. Any surgery you ever feel inclined to do to my letters is fine with me.

Oh, by the way, I don't think the idea of holding Dipcon in the UK was meant to be an internationalist thing [?] and merely reflected a few people's misconception of what Dipcon's status was. Happily, "Worldcon" now seems the accepted idea and has every prospect of going ahead. See you in Canterbury next year?

### **Jeff Groteboer**

In issue one you called it "numer jeden", but issue two was simply "Nr. 2". Come on, why not continue the language lesson? My interest is piqued, now! [*No problem.*]

Something which was brought to my attention a few days ago: there is a group who polls the voting public every year around the January time-frame on which institution is the most trusted. Every year, there have been a number of constants: Religious institutions have led consistently as the most trustworthy; lawyers have predictably held rock-bottom for quite some time. Amazingly, however, this year was different. While lawyers kept their reputations intact, the Church was no longer number one! The most trusted institution in the USA was, according to the poll, the military!

What does this say as a social commentary? For this to have occurred, a number of things had to happen in 1986. First, and I believe foremost, came the incidents with Libya. Americans have been fed up since 1980 with terrorism, and the only thing which seems to have had an effect on terrorism worldwide has been the U.S. attacks on Libya. Remember how angry everyone was about terrorist acts against Americans? Remember the concern that the bombing of Libya would cause retributive acts of terrorism on Americans everywhere? They never materialized, of course, because Libya and other terrorists worldwide got the idea that the U.S. was no longer to be toyed with. Even amidst complaints about bombs falling on the wrong targets the actions taken by the U.S. military were applauded by Americans and, privately, by other nations as well. In fact, it is France who was blamed more for the inaccuracies in the attacks than the U.S. military! Americans seemed to believe that if France had allowed Air Force bombers to fly over their airspace, all the bombs would have landed perfectly on target!

But what of the Church? How could an institution of such strength, possessing such enormous leadership power, fall from its position as most trusted? Trust in one's religion goes deep down to the most basic needs, fears, and dreams. It is the cornerstone of the lives of many of us. How could that cornerstone be broken (or at least chipped)? It is probably not the basic beliefs which have become suspect, but rather the church as an institution. Church leaders have not shown a unity of purpose recently. They have engaged in public arguments on numerous topics, fighting amongst themselves on a number of issues. They appeared arbitrary, punishing ordained clergymen for not following the precepts of the religious seat, for taking stands on abortion or contraception which did not follow the established church doctrine. They talked and talked about apartheid in South Africa, but couldn't seem to agree on an effective course of action. On terrorism, a topic which had the entire country afraid to travel to Europe, they said virtually nothing.

In all, the Church, as an institution, did little, but it said a lot. And in the eyes of the American public, doing something means something.

In their defense, the Church is not really able to do a lot. The recent visits of Church leaders to the Middle East is a positive attempt at solving the hostage problems we are having in that region, but the American people seem tired of waiting for peaceful approaches to work. Peace takes time, and Americans historically have been very impatient.

What does this mean for the future? What will American citizens expect from the military? Seen in the light of the "new conservatism" and the "Rambo" fad in the movies, will the American public expect the military to be able to get them out of even more political jams? And an even more disturbing question: Do we really want the military to be the country's strongest political tool? Remember the words of von Clausewitz: "War is an extension of foreign policy by other means."

### Wallace Nicoll

Many thanks for the sample copies of *Blunt Instruments*! Elsewhere in the wonders of modern mail delivery will be a copy of the latest issue of *Prisoners of War!*, a modest little offering in comparison with *BI*. [Yeah, right.] Well, maybe not! You make me sick. And you make Pete Lindsay, who runs our *En Garde!* game, sick too! Apple Mac and LaserWriter. Mumble, mumble. You will see from *PoW!*, when it reaches you, that it is probably one of the prettiest of the UK zines, which is partly a reflection of the fact that for the past five years, as you no doubt read in *Once Upon a Deadline* (the graphics articles) and the latest *DW*, I have been heavily involved in graphics/map production—for the past thirty seconds there have been massive hailstones dropping from the sky [!] and I'm wondering if I should go and rescue the clothes which are outside on the washing line trying to dry. But the hail has stopped, and I obviously made the correct choice not to get up off my, er, chair and go rescue them! Where was I?

[You had just finished feeding me a line about how *PoW!*, which must be one of the two or three best-looking 'zines I've ever seen (along with Sauris Allstar Unlimited/Genesis), is nothing much. Get serious, Wallace.]

As a result, I/we do tend to do things in a more artistically pleasing manner, with a little extra effort. Just as you manage to produce a very pretty 'zine because of the wonderful facilities available on the Mac, along with the laser printer. I have had a couple of drives on a Mac—the advertising over here is "Test drive a Macintosh"—and found it pretty good, except that we didn't have a laser printer wired up to it. Yes, I would like a Mac/LaserWriter, but current prices for the new machines are Mac SE—£2495 for dual floppy, £3195 for 20meg hard disk; Mac II—£4500 for single floppy, £5500 for 40meg hard disk. Throw on another £3500-£5000 for the laser, and you then see why few folks here have them. In fact, the cheapest laser printers over here seem to be about £1750. Renting a MacPlus is about £45 a week. How do these compare to US prices, given the current \$1.60 for each £ sterling?

[I saw the prices that Dick gave you in *HOL*; by way of comparison, Apple has a policy with many universities which allows full-time students and faculty to purchase machines at lower prices than one would find elsewhere. A Mac SE w/dual floppy is \$1870 (£1169), w/20mg hard disk—\$2370 (£1481); Mac II w/single floppy—\$2410 (£1506), w/40mg hard disk—\$3410 (£2131). As you can see, UK prices are significantly (over 100%!) higher. One can even buy a complete desktop publishing package (Mac SE w/two floppy drives & LaserWriter, plus various accessories such as AppleTalk connectors) for \$5675 (£3547). Renting a MacPlus is around \$50/week (prices vary considerably).]

We use a BBC micro—32K of memory—costing about £350, a £150 Amstrad printer, and a £30 printing facility which gives me a basic twenty-two fonts, and the ability to create as many as ninety-nine more. One problem with the printing program is that I'm limited to the size of text that I can produce. Normally I'll use Letraset/typesetting which fell into my hands after being laid off from the oil company (Britoil) that I worked for. We had about four typesetting terminals, and a couple of typesetting machines for text production in the drawing office—now that makes even the Mac/laser combo look like caveman writing! I also have a "headings" program which I sometimes use for stuff in the zine—all the province names on the Excalibur map, in the zine, were done using it. Again, I can create all the fonts I require, though it does involve a lot of keying in of the data statements!

[32K—is that a typo?]

I began writing articles, and ultimately taking over *Psychopath* from Mike Dean and turning it



into PoW!, as a means of restimulating my brain. After five years at University—taking notes, writing essays, dissertation, etc.—I found myself in a totally graphic environment, where words were never used in anything more than a six-word phrase. Well, not quite, but the only big chunks of words we used were always someone else's! I no longer find myself in a situation where I'm "at a loss for the correct word," a situation which was steadily becoming more common as time went by.

Enough of me, for now. Yes, I liked your zine, and with the recent folds of *XL*, *NFA*, and *Xeno*, we've lost a few of our US trades. We still see *EE*, *CR*, *Costa*, *IT*, and *Pommes*, and aim to be sitting at around the six-eight mark. I think Pere might well be another one. Yeah! Hit me with more *Blunt Instruments*. I guess lots of folk have said that to you! [*Only Gary Coughlan. I knew he was a closet Brit!*] Lots of reading material to get your teeth into—it took me forty-five minutes one day recently travelling to work to read through #2, and I didn't finish #3 on the return trip! Hope you find *PoW!* interesting and worthy of the trade.

I was over in the States last year at the end of April, and stayed with Cathy/Eric in Chicago for about a week out of my month. Thoroughly enjoyed the trip. Although I've printed my report in the zine at the time, would you be interested in reading it? [*You bet!*] You will also not know that I went to Poland as part of my University degree course. I did Geography at St. Andrews (here in Scotland, on the east coast, northeast of Edinburgh and spent twelve days in Krakow and Zakopane. Somewhere here I should have a report I put together after my return. Again, I could send that, but it may may you homesick. [*I'll take that chance!*] We were there in September 1979, a short while before the troubles really brewed up. As a result, I have a soft spot for things Polish, and take a little more interest in the country now.

It was a great experience and I'd like to go back, and not be as restricted as we were—we were there as official guests of the University of Krakow, with whom St. Andrews University had made a number of exchanges. The country was a real contrast—the luxury coach we were travelling in, south from Krakow to Zakopane, kept being held back on the dual carriageways by horses and carts. We were obviously tourists, and were continually being asked if we wanted to exchange money—at 200zl to the £, as opposed to the official rate of 80—and we occasionally took them up on their generous offers. All highly illegal, of course, but I think the Government at the time were turning a blind eye to it, as it increased the amount of hard currency that was floating in the economy. Or maybe it was just that there was so much of it going on that they couldn't face the hassle.

As for films. I presume you have seen *Man of Marble* and *Man of Iron*. [*Of course.*] Great films, but again I probably like them because of my affinities towards the country. However, I don't really like classical music, nor Slavic literature. I'm more into rock (most of it late '70s) and sf&f fiction, though I have been doing a bit of background reading into the Viking period, and the Dark Ages in Europe. As a result, the two historical Dip variants in *PoW!* have quite a bit of background colouring with them.

As regards house rules, we don't really have any written down for the zine games. We do allow players to submit provisional orders in case of NMRs, or postal delays, and the like, but very few do this. When I've been playing games, I try to send in a set of orders almost as soon as the zine comes out, and then, after negotiations have taken place, submit a second.

It is certainly refreshing to see an American zine in which the writings are literate—Cathy's style in *CR* is interesting, but nevertheless, it's a unique style. It is interesting to note the different backgrounds to the editors in the UK, when compared to the US, as Simon Billenness points out in *DW* 45. It was something that Cathy, Steve Knight, and I discussed when I was in Chicago last year.

And just before I close and go make a bacon and mushroom flan—OK, quiche!—for tea, I'll just say that I agree with you about the use of colour in Dip maps. Any game I've been in, in which there is a map, get coloured in as soon as I get it. The use of different tones is less successful, as you should really aim to get each tone to be of equal density, unless you aim to make the country with the most units in the heaviest tone. Problems might then occur regarding the clarity of province boundaries, and so on. Using letters is a compromise. They are of even density, which can make it difficult to sort out who's where at a glance.

And lastly, I was not impressed with the *Civilisation* map—sort of lets the whole quality image of the zine plummet. It is especially impossible to see what areas are water and which aren't. The coastline is not at all clear.

[*You were one of the few people who didn't like the Civ map. Once one has familiarized oneself with the regular Civ map, visualizing the coastlines in the pbm map becomes second nature.*]

## **Simon Billenness**

I was interested to read your editorial on Dipcon in Britain. You may be interested to know that Britain does not have its own "Dipcon"—the National Diplomacy Championships which have been held at Midcon for several years now. I wasn't sure whether Dipcon was viewed as a purely North American affair or an event which could hop over the pond every now and then. I distributed the flyer with the *ZR* to broaden the discussion, and give as many people as possible the chance to have their say. What is interesting is that the response I've enjoyed so far is nearly unanimous.

The vast majority of North American hobbyists view Dipcon as a solely North American event. However, like yourself, nearly everyone likes the idea of an international event, separate from Dipcon. I've already written long letters about this to *House of Lords* and *Mad Policy*, the two 'zines where the bulk of the discussion is taking place. Now I'm echoing Fred Davis' suggestion in *Bushwacker* in which he proposes a bi-annual convention rotating between Britain, North America, and continental Europe. This way, "Diplomacy Worldcon" (as I'm currently terming it) could be held in conjunction with Manorcon in Britain, Dipcon in North America, and the newly established Eurocon on the Continent. I think it would be best to grant the "Diplomacy Worldcon" title to existing conventions to make sure that the turnout is as high as possible.

What will this mean in practice? Probably not a great deal at first. Every two years somebody will be able to add "World Diplomacy Champion" to his list of accomplishments. Also, more hobbyists will find an incentive to combine a vacation abroad with a trip to a foreign-held Diplomacy Worldcon. I reckon only a handful (probably no more than ten) of hobbyists will be prepared to fly across the Atlantic at first, but it would certainly help to reinforce transatlantic hobby ties. As for the future, who knows? As the hobby continues to grow, so will Diplomacy Worldcon, but we do need to work out the basic framework.

Part of the necessary framework will be a "Diplomacy Worldcon Charter". I envisage something like the Dipcon Charter laying down the basics of a bi-annual convention shuttling between Britain, North America, and continental Europe. Of course, this will need plenty of discussion....

*[And I can't think of anyone more suited to this than you, Simon. I am just a bit concerned over the prospects for the continental leg, what with Jaap Jacobs' comments in a recent Oxymoron about the state of conventions there.]*

## **Bruce Linsey**

You are correct, in my opinion, to note that the two-player version of *Empire Builder* lacks a lot of the strategic depth of the multi-player game. The two-player game has the sole redeeming feature that it is quick and easy to play, whereas a six-player game can take hours, even for experienced vets. This is a critical factor in some face-to-face settings, when people just want a quick evening of fun, a couple of fast games. Postally, it's not a factor at all—a whole round of moves gets played each deadline whether we're talking two players or six ... or eight. So I can see no advantage to limiting a postal game to two or three players.

*[I never suggested that it should.]*

You and your friend might be interested in trying a variant rule proposed by Bruce McIntyre for two- and three- player games. Simply declare small cities locked out if *one* player builds in, and medium cities if *two* players build in. Then take one of each product out of general supply before starting. These changes do add back a bit of the strategy of the larger game, though there's still no comparison.

You are correct to note the lack of variety in a two-player game, but this is largely rectified if you throw in the additional contract cards I've devised. These were constructed with the goals of opening up the less-used routes and cities, and of evening out the importance of products. This is the deck being used postally.

On the other hand, I firmly disagree with your advice not to buy a superfreight, regardless of how many players are in the game. In fact, in the hundreds of games I've played (most of which were two-player games), I don't think I've ever once seen someone win without a superfreight. It's not just a matter of being able to deliver those occasional nice three-contract, cross-country runs. With a superfreight, one can also speculate, and a person who speculates intelligently often ends up making

an unexpected sale or two in the course of the game, more than compensating him for the cost of the engine. Plus, if you have the ability to carry three loads, you *can* occasionally cause a crucial product shortage for the other guy. It is not all that uncommon to force the other player not to deliver a large sugar or tourists contract by grabbing all three loads and sitting him out, dumping cards yourself and possibly getting a good payoff for the product you are carrying while making him waste several turns. *You can't do this with a fast freight.* A superfreight opens up options like this for you.

And what if you get derailed and have to lose one or two loads? Clearly, it's better to be able to choose from among three than two. The ability to carry three loads is not quite on a par with the ability to move fast (thus, we see people upgrade from freight to fast freight far more often than from a freight to a power freight), but it is still a valuable ability, well worth the price in my experience.

*[But not in mine. First of all, you mentioned intelligent speculation. Speculation, as such, does not exist in the two-player game. The simple fact that a game like this only uses about half of the deck (on the average—usually less) reduces speculation to mere chance. By midgame, one is able to narrow the remaining possibilities to only 75% of the original total, and any success with a one-in-105 guess can be chalked up to pure luck (which is already too abundant in two-player EB). Secondly, the same probability affects the chances of derailment. After having played almost a hundred ftf EB/BR games myself, I don't think we ever see more than one derailment every ten games. The odds just aren't there. Since we play with the basic deck (which only has one-load derailments), the odds of having that derailment hit while one is carrying two loads for contracts are so low as to be insignificant.]*

*[You have a much better point on the artificial shortage possibility. However, I still maintain that the cost of upgrading from fast to super retards one's rail network to the point where the other player gets a commanding lead before the cash for the upgrade is made up. Upgrading to fast freight means that one's rail lines will have to stagnate for several turns. Upgrading again creates another "cash-or-builds" crisis which may severely handicap growth for that player for a couple of rounds. In a game where a \$50m lead is nearly insurmountable (except through exceptional luck), the risk isn't worth it.]*

Perhaps we ought to get together some weekend and decide whose playing style is truly superior the only way it can truly be decided: over the EB board.

*[Too bad neither you nor I won that brief EB game at Dipcon. Perhaps Zarse should write an article?]*

It is not my experience that "the endgame usually sees a player victorious by a margin of one delivery." This happens often enough to make things interesting, but more often the runner-up will have \$125m-\$200m or so. Some games are more lopsided, some less. Once in a while we get one that goes right down to the wire—the most exciting kind, if you ask me.

As for your problem of the winner sometimes being decided by first-move determination, simply allow whoever went last to have a final turn at the game's end. If more than one player acquires the victory total in the same round, whoever has the most money wins. This is not only more fair, it occasionally produces some really thrilling finishes.

You encourage people to try running a game of postal EB, and of course I second the motion. May I indulge in a self-plug here? *[Certainly.]* I have written a detailed article on just how I go about running the game by mail. This article appeared in *Trax* #30 *[Bruce's postal EB 'zine]*, which also contains my houserules and a typical adjudication for a round of postal play. The issue, thirty pages long, sells for a buck and will be helpful to new traxmasters.

*[Anyone who is interested in a copy of the issue (which is absolutely invaluable if you are considering running postal EB) can send \$1 to Bruce Linsey, 73 Ashuelot Street, Apt. 3, Dalton, MA 01226.]*

No, I do *not* wish that Geryk would shut up about these "stupid" houserules! Indeed, that's one of the most interesting parts of your zine. *[!]*

The discussion of Berch's "War by Automatic Pilot" rule was fascinating. The desirability of using the rule is certainly open to debate—as you know, I personally like it (subject to seeing how it operates in action, of course). The regularity of the rule, on the other hand, is utterly unimpeachable, for exactly the reasons given by you and Mark Berch (and also Alan Stewart in *Praxis*). The people who question the rule's regularity quite clearly don't have a full handle on the meaning of the term. There is nothing remotely "irregular" about it.

*[Steve Heinowski apparently agrees with you (and Mark, and Alan), as I'm sure you've read by*

*now in Everything. I'm glad everything is straightened out, even though I won't be using the rule.]*

The reason that you felt that my logic "doesn't follow" regarding comprehensive houserules and strict GMing is that you misstated my argument. All I was claiming was that comprehensive houserules are not synonymous with strict GMing. To illustrate that, it is sufficient to show that a person can hold a favorable view on one and not the other—as is the case with both Paul Rauterberg and Randolph Smyth.

Your rebuttal addressed the argument that I wasn't attempting to make at all; namely, that a strict GM can operate in practice without comprehensive houserules. This goes much farther than what I was trying to show. Further, I question even the validity of your conclusion on this matter, but since I don't have a good example to back up my case, there's no point in debating the matter at length. I firmly believe, however, that a GM could legitimately run his game strictly with but a few well-written houserules to cover himself. All he need address are such things as mislabeled or unlabeled units, missing nationalities in foreign support or convoy orders, the strictness of deadlines, and a few other points. Most houserules don't deal with matters of strict GMing at all, so aren't necessary to the strict running of a game.

In response to my question of why a player wouldn't take a few minutes to get his orders right in the first place, you say "Maybe because the next mail pickup is only three minutes away." My comeback to that would be that he should wait till the next day's pickup and still take the time to get them right. Or, if it's too close to the deadline and the negotiations dictate an order change, he should at least start writing them early enough in the day that he has a few minutes to perform this crucial function. And as a last resort, he should (if the GM permits it) verify them with a phone call. I stand by my statement that there is no excuse, in a game with deadlines weeks apart, for hastily-written orders which might compromise all the effort that has gone into a player's negotiation. But it's surprising how many players I've met over the years who just dash off a quick set of scribbled orders on a postcard at the last possible second. My experience is that players who do that don't often hang around till the end of the game, let alone do well.

*[My "three minutes" response was a mocking of Kevin Tighe's description of "typical order writing" rather than an actual response. I'll try to make my humor more obvious (and funnier) in the future.]*

Many thanks to Rod Walker for his kind words about my (former) zine. It's nice to be remembered, I'll say that.

### **Bill Becker**

Allow me to yell at Bruce Linsey about GMing, strict or otherwise. Linsey finds the question, "... why, then, is it unreasonable to ask players to take five minutes to get their orders in the correct format." (Should have been "a"?)

Bruce does not offer the answer! Very unlike him to answer his own question. The answer is that the correct format varies from GM to GM. I don't ransack the house looking for houserules each time I submit orders. If the GM can't follow my straightforward style of order writing, it will become obvious to me, and I just won't bother playing there. I hate houserules that are different from my standard. I still admire the GMs as the people I may know them to be; I just hate their houserules.

### **Jeff Hoffman**

Your comments on the review of opera "subtitles": I disagree with one of your comments. You state that, "it seems pretty silly to sing a song that no one understands." Why? A song can be a collection of nonsensical syllables that "merely" sound good. If you are listening for the music and "form" of the words, then what they actually say may be secondary to you. One of my favorite songs is "Cam Ye O'er Frae France" as sung by the English group Steeleye Span. I suspect the singer, Maddy Prior, is singing in a version of Old English as I can understand a few of her words and the syntax seems English. But I do not understand the words; they (and the music) are simply beautiful.

I do not care for opera. However, I understand that someone could feel for this music the way I do for other music. I've a suggestion for Claudia Cassidy: when the subtitles become too much, just close your eyes. After all, the human voice is for the ear.

*[The problem with opera is that very little of the action on stage is obvious without an*

understanding of what is being sung. Unless one has memorised the libretto, things can be very confusing.

*[Slightly off the topic, your comment about Steeleye Span reminds me of some similar music which I have grown to enjoy. Do any of you Canadians listen to CBC Stereo on Sunday mornings? When I still lived at home in Michigan, I always listened to the Max Ferguson Show, which played a most delightful collection of folk music. One group I remember hearing was Scottish group called Runnrigg, yet I have never been able to find anything by them anywhere. Ring a bell, anybody?]*

### **Jacques Bélanger**

I own an Apple computer myself, though not a Macintosh. It is an old Apple II+ I bought in 1982. Prices have declined sharply since then. This summer I plan to buy an IBM-PC clone. I have Avalon Hill's *Computer Diplomacy* program but I saw one review that the program plays weakly as Italy, Germany, and Austria. I plan to program a *Diplomacy* game (not just the adjudications, but the strategies, negotiations, and press). This is why I need a hard disk to do the job. I already have a *Risk* game running on the old Apple, and I plan to program an improved version. One of my pet projects is to organize an all-computer Dip game, with seven computers, each playing one country. (At least a computer does not mind being stabbed.)

In real life (or maybe real life is the games) *[scary thought]* I'm a systems analyst for a big accounting corporation since April 1985. I still keep a sideline at my previous job in pulmonary research, and I'm completing a Certificate in computer science at Laval University in Québec. So I know what overload is!

I feel that a smaller zine each month would be better, as frequent issues tend to keep up interest among subbers. However, the decision is yours; I know university studies can put a lot of pressure on one at times, so I'll understand if the 'zine is a few days late.

*[How about several months? Seriously, I am really becoming scared that I am going to be "perpetually late." Changing the structure of the 'zine is a real possibility. I simply cannot continue to be late like this.]*

The WAP rule generated much controversy. As I wrote in *Praxis*, I favor this rule for year 1901 because it is where NMRs do the greatest damage to the game. Beyond 1901, I feel most of the automatic moves will be irrelevant to the present situation and this policy could encourage more players to send their orders near the deadline. I also feel it penalizes the more careful players. However, if you announce this rule before the game, players will know what to expect.

*[I disagree with your assertion that most repeated orders will be irrelevant to the current situation after 1901. In fact, (Fall) 1901 is probably the only season where such repeated moves will be nearly useless. The only good that repeating moves does is in the case of standoffs, since if units complete their moves, they do not benefit from repeats. Since the greatest damage done by 1901 NMRs is in terms of lost builds, WAP would do nothing in the way of protection. A standoff in Spring, 1901 would, if repeated by one side, result in a successful move into a non-supply center province, since the only two possible bounces over supply centers in S'01 are over Rumania and Venice/Trieste. Hardly a case of all-consuming relevance.]*

P.S. Your maps are the best! *[Thanks!]*

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"Death," he had said on another occasion, "seems to be merely a bad habit, which nature is at present powerless to overcome. I once had a dear friend—a beautiful boy full of life, with the face of an angel and the muscles of a panther. He cut himself while opening a tin of preserved peaches—you know, the large, soft, slippery kind that plap in the mouth and slither down. He died a few days later of blood poisoning. Fatuous, isn't it? And yet ... yes, it is strange, but true, that, viewed as a work of art, the shape of his life would not have been so perfect had he been left to grow old. Death often is the point of life's joke."

*Laughter in the Dark, Vladimir Nabokov*

# HOW TO PICK AN ENEMY

by Jack "Mad Dog" McHugh

You are playing Russia in a *Diplomacy* game and have just received replies from all the other players. They all write that they want to ally with you! After being revived (you, of course, fainted, as this has never happened to you—or anyone else—before), but before you go running down to your local chapter of Ripley's "Believe It or Not" to submit your correspondence for display, you have an important decision to make: who will you choose to attack?

The significant difference between choosing an enemy and choosing an ally is the pressure choosing an ally puts on you to come up with some long-term strategic plan for your win. Unlike choosing the wrong ally, choosing the wrong enemy is a very difficult mistake to rectify. Why? You can always turn on an ally, but turning a former enemy into a friend is much harder to do.

Why is a plan necessary in the first place? After all, there are six other countries on the board, so if you make the wrong choice, there are still five others left, right? Wrong! First of all, one doesn't play the game in a vacuum—while you do your Diogenes imitation (searching the board for an "honest man"), the other players will be making plans of their own, with or without your input. The other players might be unwilling to change their plans which they decided upon while you were making up your mind.

Secondly, it helps to know what sort of position you want to be in a few years down the road. Let's say that you, as Russia, want to eventually control Scandinavia. In such a case, you had better make a friend down south and choose England as your enemy. Denying England any piece of Scandinavia from the beginning is much preferable to promising her part of it in a deal to attack Germany, since England is much harder to dislodge from Scandinavia, thanks to the Royal Navy. If you are Germany and have eventual designs on the Low Countries, France must go! There is no way to convince a competent French player to give up the Low Countries forever, as they are too close to France proper.

Thirdly, deciding on a first victim helps determine who your "second wave" enemy will be. No true *Diplomacy* player is satisfied with just one conquest! Who do you plan to take out when the first enemy is gone? If you are Italy and plan to take out Austria eventually, picking Turkey as a first victim will hamper your efforts against Austria later on, since Austria will have to be compensated for her aid in taking the Turk down.

Never limit yourself to only choosing your own enemies. Try to make sure that everyone is busy; choosing other players' enemies for them will keep them occupied for sure. After all, what are friends (and enemies) for? This will ensure that no one interferes while you rape your neighbor.

When planning your builds, it is of critical importance to know your enemy. Will you need fleets or armies, or some combination of the two? Also, getting your neighbor to make the right builds (from your standpoint) is important. For example, if you are Germany planning to attack France, get him to build fleets. It will make your job that much easier.

Most importantly, choosing an enemy gives you a plan that allows you to work toward your win on a rational basis. Most players just drift through a game with no rhyme or reason beyond a vague desire to "win the game." By having a plan that allows you to target your resources on specific countries, you don't waste your time on things you don't need or want. Negotiations need an underlying reason; every letter should have a specific goal, whether it be securing military assistance, determining spheres of influence, or simply keeping the peace.

So, what are you waiting for? Look at that board and choose your enemies as carefully as your friends. With the former, unlike with the latter, you may not get a second chance.

*[This has been languishing in my files for an eternity, but it's finally seeing print here (among other places). I don't like to do reprints, but Jack sent this to me before it appeared anywhere else, so it's solely my fault that it was printed elsewhere first. Jack gets \$5 for his contribution (until BI becomes more regular, I'll be staying away from free issues. As Jeff Zarse said, "\$10 should get you a lifetime subscription!") Thanks, pal.]*



## “WE ARE NOT ‘COMRADES’!”

### *Hungary's Thirteen Days*

The ascension of Gerö was by no means a substantive change in the direction of liberalisation. While a concession of sorts had been made with the removal of Rákosi and the inclusion in the new government of two anti-Stalinists recently released from prison—János Kádár and György Marosán—Gerö was nothing less than Rákosi's henchman, his collaborator in the litany of crimes committed by the previous regime. Every charge that could have been leveled at Rákosi could just as easily have applied to Gerö. Even Tito, who had been the target of Rákosi's denunciations, found little consolation in the removal of Rákosi. While the face of the demon had changed, his visage was no less hideous.

Unfortunately, as far as the Party was concerned, there was little choice. The Party hierarchy was solidly Stalinist, and any significant change in ideological posture would have had to come from without. That alternative meant Imre Nagy, and this was not a pill that the Kremlin was inclined to swallow. The choice of Gerö allowed the Soviet Union to maintain complete control over Hungarian policy. The acceptance of Nagy would have meant the acceptance of his ideology, which would have resulted in the transformation of Hungary from a Soviet fiefdom to a Yugoslav-type Communist state whose loyalty to the “international bonds between Communist Parties” would have been open to question. Clearly, there could only be one choice for Moscow.

Nevertheless, Gerö's ascension was marked by an attempt to give the impression of softening the previous line. The removal of Rákosi had the effect of momentarily pacifying the opposition, although by the end of the summer of 1956 the agitation had resumed, this time targetted at Gerö. While popular dissatisfaction became more and more acute, dissenters within the Party hoped for an internal solution to the nation's problems which would obviate the need for outside interference. Unfortunately, the biggest stumbling block in the path of internal reform was the intransigence of the Party with regard to Nagy's ostracism. Despite Moscow's apparent interest in having Nagy return to the government in some capacity, the Hungarian Party would not budge on the question of Nagy's readmittance. Meetings took place, but the subject was never seriously pursued by the Hungarian leadership. It is hardly surprising that Gerö and his cohort found a possible re-emergence of Nagy as politically dangerous for them; what is unusual is the fact that no move was made by the Kremlin to improve Nagy's position. Had the Russians truly wanted him in charge, they certainly would have found his reinstatement no more difficult to enforce than his removal.

Meanwhile, Gerö's government was searching for a way either to defuse Nagy or to provoke him and his supporters into an act which would allow them to use violent means to crush the opposition and restore to themselves a degree of control on a level with that previously enjoyed by the Rákosi regime. Gerö hoped for a reconciliation with Yugoslavia, which would elevate him in both the eyes of the people and those of the anti-Stalinist rulers in the Kremlin. Gerö was hampered by the fact that the Party opposition advocated a restructuring of the regime, rather than its elimination, and in this sense was difficult to convince the Soviets that the opposition within the country was not anti-Stalinist but rather revolutionary. It was because of problems such as these that Gerö needed to provoke a rebellion which he could then suppress, eliminating important opposition leaders with it. Otherwise, Moscow would never allow him to violence as long as the rift with Tito remained.

In fact, Gerö was able to achieve the *rapprochement* with Yugoslavia that he so desperately sought. Khrushchev undoubtedly wished for a Hungarian-Yugoslav reconciliation, which would increase his prestige in the Soviet Union as the restorer of Communist unity. Tito, his ambitions as an international Communist leader having been thwarted by Stalin and the exclusion from the Cominform of the Yugoslav Party, was torn between a desire to aid Khrushchev (who might otherwise be supplanted by the anti-Yugoslav Stalinists) and his extreme distaste for Gerö, who still bore the mark of the Rákosi regime. Tito remained in this undecided state when he met with Khrushchev in late September of 1956, subsequently travelling with him to the Crimea, where he “just happened” to meet Ernő Gerö. This “surprise” meeting had been arranged by Khrushchev to facilitate the reconciliation that Gerö so desperately sought. After a series of negotiations, Tito finally agreed to settle his differences with the Hungarian leadership, and invited a Hungarian delegation to Yugoslavia. Elated with his success, Gerö set out for Belgrade on October 14th, along with Kádár, Prime Minister Andás Hegedüs, and Politburo member Antal Aproz. At the conclusion of a week of talks, a declaration of friendship and co-operation was signed by the two Parties.

Meanwhile, the question of Imre Nagy had failed to resolve itself. Despite the urging of Gerö, Kádár, and Mikoyan, Nagy refused to exercise any form of self-criticism, maintaining that his expulsion by the Party had been a violation of Party rules, and that the Central Committee should not only readmit him, but apologise as well. He steadfastly refused to form any sort of extra-Party opposition, or even to allow any action on his behalf that did not adhere to the principles of Marxist conduct. Nagy's behavior was representative of his basic belief that any changes could only be implemented through recognized Party channels. Such refusal to deviate from the system in which, although it had consistently proven itself unsuited to the sort of reform Nagy envisioned, continued to enjoy his utmost confidence, would characterize Nagy's behavior throughout the crisis.

In the end, Nagy agreed not to press his claim, and only to request readmission to the Party. His letter of October 4th stated Nagy's wish to return to the party in order to preserve a "firm and homogeneous policy." However, no self-criticism or expression of guilt for past offenses was included in the letter; Nagy was completely unrepentant.

The Politburo's response came on the 13th, a nine-day delay which was not lost on Nagy or his supporters. The Politburo did annul Nagy's expulsion, but the text of the resolution contained language which made it clear that the matter of his previous behavior was not settled. The Central Committee was given the task of dealing with the matter of Nagy's "transgressions". Nagy's tacit compliance with this treatment was seen by many of his supporters as a sign of weakness. On the other hand, time was limited, and the increasing tension within the country may have made Nagy feel that a swallowing of his pride would be preferable to any further delay.

All the while, Hungary's revolutionary mood intensified. At the General Meeting of the Writers' Association in September, the entire list of Party-approved candidates for the Association's Executive Committee was defeated, replaced instead by a host of non-Party writers opposed to "Socialist realism". Within the context of the Communist system, this was nothing less than an open act of revolution, for it freed the Writers' Association from any Party control. The Petöfi Circle began meeting once again, and government policies once again were subject to intense criticism, particularly in the area of agriculture. All around, the government was faced with increasingly open dissent. Then came the news of Poland.

After the death of Boleslaw Bierut, moves had been made in the Polish Party towards the restoration to power of Wladyslaw Gomulka, who had been expelled from the Party in 1949 for much the same reason as Nagy. During that fateful October of 1956, the liberal majority in the Polish Party acted, bringing Gomulka in as First Secretary on the 19th. This was in direct contradiction to Moscow's wishes, and also went against the will of the old-guard Stalinist group within the Polish leadership. Warsaw poised for a confrontation as Soviet tanks moved in to enforce the wishes of the Kremlin. A top-level delegation flew in from Moscow, composed of Khrushchev, Molotov, Mikoyan, and Kaganovich. However, none of this could sway the Poles, and the Soviets finally backed down, agreeing to the change in leadership on October 21st.

The Polish success galvanized the Hungarian opposition. Poland and Hungary had a long tradition of friendship, reinforced by both countries' experiences with threats to their independence. Polish officers had come to Hungary's aid during the "Spring of Nations" in 1848, and Hungarians felt that, once again, the two nations were united in a common cause—that of national self-determination in the face of Soviet imperialism. Indeed, the first demonstration of the revolution began ostensibly as a show of Hungarian solidarity with the Poles. If the people of Poland had been able to impose their will on the Soviets; why couldn't the people of Hungary do likewise?

The answer lay in the fundamental differences inherent in the two situations. True, the Parties of both nations were divided, but in Poland the division was evident at the very highest level of authority. The Hungarian Party's opposition manifested itself mostly in the lower and middle echelons; there was no dissent at the top. Gomulka's ascension in Poland was made possible because members of the Polish Politburo—men like Ochab and Cyrankiewicz—wanted Gomulka appointed to the post of General Secretary, and were prepared to go against the very wishes of the Kremlin in order to assert their authority. The Hungarian Politburo, on the other hand, was unanimously against Nagy, and actually resisted Moscow's overtures aimed at restoring Nagy to some Party post. Even so, the Hungarian Party, demoralized by its inability to deal with the domestic crisis and the obvious hatred felt for it by the masses, was in no condition to resist Moscow, even if it had had the desire to do so. The Gerö clique's security depended on Soviet goodwill.



There was, however, an even more fundamental difference. In Poland, there was no "people's revolution" in the strict sense of the term. Rather, it was the Communist Party which revolted against its parent organization. Although the great majority of the Polish people favored the change, they themselves did not bring it about. In Hungary, the opposition's strength lay in the people, many of whom were outside the Party. The Party itself was the enemy.

Encouraged by the events in Poland, student group began to form to draw up demands to present to the Government. These demands, while rather vague, encompassed a broad range of issues, ranging from the release of political prisoners to the disclosure of economic figures and trade equality with the Soviet Union. Imre Nagy made Prime Minister, and press restraints were to be lifted. A demonstration, in the form of a march to lay a wreath at the foot of the statue of General Józef Bem, a Polish hero who had volunteered his services to the Hungarians during the Revolution of 1848-9, was called for the afternoon of October 23rd. These demands were circulated in the form of handbills, for the students had been refused permission to broadcast their demands over the radio. By the thousands, the people Budapest read the handbills with approval. At the offices of *Szabad Nép*, the Communist daily, a meeting of the editorial staff was convoked to consider the events transpiring in the streets. After heated discussion, it was decided that a delegation from the newspaper would be sent to the Central Committee to press for the Party to accede to the demands of the people.

Gerö, who had just returned from Belgrade on the morning that the crisis developed, was in no mood for concessions. He had thought that his news of an agreement with Yugoslavia would bring him the people's acclaim, and increase support for him, both at home and in Moscow. In a speech at the railroad station upon his return, he had expected his words to be met with applause. Instead, no one cared. Events had passed him by, and his recent triumph had proved meaningless.

In any case, the Communist leaders were bound to meet the events of the 23rd with animosity. They misjudged the strength of the sentiment against them, however, when they decided that all that was necessary to prevent any further protests was a ban on all demonstrations. Instead, this prohibition convinced many who had not planned on demonstrating to join the march. In issuing the ban, the Government had turned the march from a show of support for the Poles into act of defiance.

The march began as an orderly procession, with the marchers carrying few banners or placards. It proceeded to the statue of Sandor Petöfi, where a wreath was laid at the foot of the statue and a young actor read both a poem by Petöfi and the demands drawn up by the students. Then, carrying Hungarian, red, and Polish flags, the marchers continued on towards the statue of General Bem.

On the march to Bem's statue, the crowd was joined by workers returning home from the factories, and the demonstration became a mixture of students and workers. Windows were opened and people leaned out to cheer the marchers. When the demonstration reached the Bem statue, it was joined by several hundred students from the Military Academy. In addition, a barracks building of the Hungarian National Guard adjoined the square, and the demonstrators were heartily cheered by the soldiers who leaned out the windows. This gave the people confidence that even though the Government might attempt to use the armed forces to crush the revolt, the soldiers were sympathetic to the cause of popular liberation. The people stood unified.

Finally, the march proceeded to Parliament Square, where the demonstrators began to shout for Imre Nagy. When the lights illuminating the Square were extinguished, the crowd lit up the leaflets that had been given to them during the march, imploring them to disperse and wait for that evening planned radio address by Gerö. When Nagy finally appeared, his speech was far from what the crowd expected. Nagy asked them to return home, promising that the Government would "not delay in arriving at its decisions." The conservative tone of the speech disappointed many demonstrators, who were afraid that Nagy might have compromised with the Government. The crowd began to disperse.

At the building housing Radio Budapest, a similar confrontation was taking place. A group of demonstrators had split off from the main body during the march in order to try and make the demands of the people known over the radio. However, when they arrived at the building, they were met by a reinforced guard of secret police, and a refusal by the directors of Radio Budapest to allow the students to broadcast anything. A delegation of students entered the building to negotiate with the radio officials. In the tense hours that followed, the mood of the crowd became more and more aggressive. The demonstrators demanded that a microphone be set up in the square for them to speak

through. A car equipped with a microphone was eventually driven out into the street, but when the crowd realized that the microphone was nothing more than a decoy, they seized the car and began smashing it against the gates of the radio building, while others started throwing bricks at the windows.

Gerö's radio address at eight that evening is generally accepted to be the spark that lit the flame of the revolution. Callous, insensitive, and out of touch with the situation, Gerö referred to the demonstrators as "subverters of socialist freedom" and "unsavory elements". Although an educated listener might have detected some signs of a possible compromise in the tone and phrasing of Gerö's speech, the sensitivity of the people was beyond such delicate observations. Repeating an endless series of Marxist clichés, he succeeded in doing what years of deprivation had failed to do—he pushed the country over the brink. Even Tito was to remark later that Gerö's "stupidity" turned a demonstration into a revolution.

The detachment guarding the building was composed of about five hundred heavily-armed policemen. The guard attempted to disperse the crowd, first with tear gas and then with fire hoses. Finally, after securing the area in front of the building, the guard set up firing positions.

To this day, there is a dispute as to who fired first. The official Hungarian position is contradictory, and eyewitnesses were never certain where the opening shots originated. What ensued, however, was beyond dispute: the unarmed crowd was taken by surprise, and soon the street was covered with dead and wounded civilians. Two tanks which had been called by the Government to reinforce the defenders arrived on the scene, but instead of firing on the crowd, they acted as a shield under which the crowd renewed its assault. Policemen and soldiers who refused to fight against the insurgents turned over their weapons to the crowd, and a little while later trucks arrived, loaded with weapons and ammunition taken from various arsenals by sympathetic workers. The Revolution had begun in earnest.

The attack on the radio building was the crucial turning point in the uprising. Up to that point, Gerö had hoped for exactly such an excuse to eliminate the opposition by force. Unfortunately, when the time came to use force, Gerö found that he had no control over its use. The Army elements which were to have quickly restored order joined the insurgents, leaving the regime with only the AVH, and only the professional members of that. Recruited members of the Security Police defected in droves, leaving the instruments of the Government severely depleted. The "Bastille" of Budapest marked the end of controlled protest and the beginning of a seige.

At about the same time, a mob had taken to dismantling the huge bronze statue of Stalin which stood in the City Park. Hated as a symbol of Soviet domination, the crowd at first could not make the colossus move. Finally, a group of metalworkers set to the statue's knees with blowtorches. Shortly afterwards, ropes tied around the former Soviet dictator's neck brought the monstrosity tumbling down.

The Central Committee meeting that night, it was decided that martial law was required to restore the country to order. In the event that the uprising could not be controlled by the Hungarian Army and police, provisions were made to call on Soviet forces for assistance. Nagy was offered the post of Premier, which he accepted. He still had faith in the Party.

As it turned out, that Party still had surprises in store for Nagy. On the morning of the 24th, the people of Budapest heard their radios declare that their hero, Nagy, had declared martial law in the city. This shocking revelation followed a broadcast where it was announced that Nagy had been named Premier, and that a major turnover on the Politburo had taken place. Events in the streets, however, had overtaken political developments. Nagy's appointment was tempered by the fact that Gerö remained as First Secretary, and the naming of several previously imprisoned anti-Stalinists to the Secretariat had little effect. Had this taken place only a little earlier, before blood had been spilled to baptize the revolution, following events might have been radically different. Sadly, this served only to mark a trend that would recur throughout the revolution: political events consistently lagged behind developments in the streets.

In addition to the announcement of martial law, there came a further declaration which stunned the populace: Soviet troops had been called in by the government to assist in the suppression of the fighting.

## ***NEXT TIME: THE FIRST SOVIET INTERVENTION***

# HOBBY NEWS

*Europa Express* has folded. That's right. I couldn't believe it, either. Apparently, Gary has found that producing the 'zine has become too time-consuming and exhausting, and decided to fold rather than burn out and drop out of the hobby entirely. So, while *EE*'s fold is an incredible shock, it really is infinitely preferable to losing Gary's presence *completely*. Still, this must be the saddest piece of news I've had all year. One can only hope that Gary will find the time to continue to write for the hobby in some other capacity (perhaps a subzine somewhere?). After all, we really can't afford to lose his wit and style, ha ha.

*Not Up to Modern Graphics Standards* is exactly what it says it is. Yet another new 'zine has appeared, this time from Michael Hopcroft, 2190 W. Burnside #108, Portland, OR 97210. While the physical quality of the 'zine is extremely low, Michael is apparently very eager to run games (although he says that he takes games "seriously", which always makes me wary), and I would encourage anyone who is looking for a gamestart to inquire further at the above address. Michael also plans to print a lot of chat. Unfortunately, the opening issue was a quite a downer, what with Michael's very frank personal description and general rambling. Not the sort of stuff I like to relax with.

*Hagalil Hamaarvi* is the transliteration of the Hebrew for "Western Galilee", and just happens to be a new 'zine from Ran Ben-Israel, also known as Randy Grigsby. Randy told me some time ago that he would be putting out a 'zine, and I have been looking forward to this for some time. Much as this 'zine has a somewhat Slavic flavor, *HH* has a Judaic one, as Randy (although a Canadian citizen, I assume) has lived in Israel for the past ten years, only recently returning to Canada. The result is a small, understated 'zine, only eight pages in length, and digest-sized at that. Randy told me that he wants to keep things fairly small, probably to avoid the monstrous size problems I've been having. In any case, Randy has openings for two regular *Diplomacy* games and one Gunboat. Gamestarts can be had at \$3 each, and the 'zine is US\$6 for ten issues (Cdn\$7).

One thing Randy has taken the trouble of doing is providing some non-gaming material, including a very short piece on the 1967 Six Day War, and a report on Fred Hyatt's mid-May game meet. The problem with *HH*'s brevity is that the supplementary material, especially the con report, tends to be cut too short. I was very interested in finding out how things had gone at Fred's, but Randy's report told me very little except for the lineup in one of the ftf Dip games he played that day. Write more, Randy!

After all the fuss made about the British Dipcon/Worldcon business, one would expect the British to follow up on the suggestion for an international convention and they have come through in fine style. Derek Caws, the wonderfully effusive publisher of *War & Peace*, has launched *Globetrotter*, a "mini-zine dedicated to promoting and discussing *Worldcon*." What *Globetrotter* consists of is a small, six-page publication housing a discussion of the mechanics of putting together the event which we hope will be the first truly international hobby convention. The (very) tentative dates for this are 8-10 July 1988 in Birmingham, which would coincide with the regularly-held Manorcon. While I can't see much that I can do personally outside of publicity and the like, I urge anyone who feels that they can help in the organization of this to write to Derek and request that he put you on the mailing list. Copies are free, as far as I can tell. I will say that while I have been visiting Europe regularly since I came to the States, I haven't been there in several years, and fully intend to make the trip in '88. I was going to go this year with a friend of mine, but I am sort of tied to Chicago for the summer, so I'll be very happy to make the trip next year, and hope that a convention is there when I am. Write to Derek at The Old Kitchen, Bere Farm House, North Boarhunt nr Fareham, Hants, PO17 6JL, UNITED KINGDOM. While you're at it, enclose a few IRCs and request a sample of his excellent *War & Peace*. And goad him into writing more; he's delightful.

By now, all of you who are not publishers and have not yet voted in the Runestone Poll should have received a copy of the Runestone Poll/Diplomacy Alliance Against Cancer pledge sheet. The deadline will probably have passed by the time you read this, but I'd like to thank all of you that voted and/or pledged for supporting the cause. I'm glad to the the amount of support the Poll is getting this year—the Cancer Alliance certainly helped!

*more hobby news spills over onto to the next page*

Because of the lateness of this issue, you won't find an insert containing the ballot for the Don Miller Memorial, Rod Walker, and John Koning Awards. The first is for outstanding service to the hobby, the second for "literary" excellence, and the third for outstanding play of *Diplomacy*. While I have no problem with publicizing the awards, I must confess that I consider both the Walker and Koning Awards to be totally bogus. How one can award a prize for "literature" to candidates who, among others, include J.R. Baker's "Dippy Doodles" cartoons is beyond me, although I have heard that the Nobel review committee is watching the balloting with interest to get some indication of who should win the prize in Literature next year. Seriously, this is a complete farce, as far as I'm concerned. Likewise, the Koning Award expects people to honestly and critically evaluate the playing skills of a group of people who most of them have never played against, and make fine distinctions between the abilities of players whom they have, for the most part, only heard about. Face-to-face ability is apparently a factor, yet I fail to see how the hobby-at-large could evaluate this. Stupid, stupid, stupid.

Oh, hey, don't let me stop you from voting, though. In fact, the more of you that vote, the more meaningless the results become in the Koning category, for the reasons stated above. Have I said enough? Fine. Next year....

David Berk's *The Communist Diner* is an unusual 'zine for those of you who enjoy, well ... the unusual. *TCD* (not to be confused with *The Canadian Diplomat*) is (at 16 digest-sized pages) a silly 'zine dedicated to "underground" comics, crude artwork, pseudo-avante garde obscurantism, and other things along this line. David apparently runs two *Diplomacy* games, although they seem to be completely irregular, as the starting positions for a few of the units have been changed. Despite all of this negative talk, *TCD* is quite interesting, and can be positively hilarious at times. A third problem, though, is that it runs to longer deadlines than *BI*; #1 appeared in July 1986, and I'm informed that #3 has just appeared. Payment is apparently by single issue, which avoids the long-term subscription risks. David also wants to run *Third Reich*, although I seriously doubt he could manage that, from what I've seen of his *Diplomacy* adjudications. However, David seems to be very much into his endeavor, and has even got some hate mail regarding the 'zine's title. (Hard to believe, isn't it?) Anyway, I would advise everyone to send David \$1 (1319 Washington, Wilmette, IL 60091) and get a copy of an issue (any one). Get a kick out of it. It's kinda fun, ya know?

*Shrodigger's Cat* (I assume the misspelling is intentional) is a new 'zine from Mike Dominskyj. At this point, Mike is interested in running variants, and he has announced plans to run Econopoly, which is a mildly complex economic game. The 'zine is four computer-printed pages long, but the price seems very steep at \$1 an issue. Mike wants to work it on an account-deduction basis, where he deducts money from subscribers' accounts in accordance with production costs. If you want to pay that much, I suggest you inquire further at P.O. Box 702, Ignace, Ontario, Canada, POT 1T0. Mike seems to have a fairly good handle on what he's doing.

Someone who has an *excellent* handle on what he is doing is one Simon Billenness, a young English chap of great renown. Fresh from his very successful tenure as keeper of the *Zine Register*, Simon now publishes a more personal 'zine called *Excitement City Unlimited*. Everything about the publisher suggests that we have plenty in store for us. The first issue announced openings in Downfall, Stab, and an International Cline-9. If you want to get in on the action, write to Simon at 630 Victory Boulevard, Apt. 6F, Staten Island, NY 10301, and ask for a fistful of excitement at 50¢ an issue. Ooooh—bargain city!

*It's a Trap!* has not folded, despite reports to the contrary. Steve Knight has found the workload to be too great and has transferred all of his *Diplomacy* games to other publications. *IT* will continue as the home of Steve's *United* football league, as well as the reading material he previously provided. Being a *United* fan myself, I hope Steve can put things back together. In fact, I'm planning to start a small *United* league of my own, independent of *BI*, utilizing an experimental set of rules courtesy of Dan Stafford. Anyne interested is invited to join in the fun. A 22¢ stamp gets you a current set of rules.

Lastly, I got a very strange *Random Thought* (#8) the other day. This is actually nothing unusual, except that this issue was *extremely* odd. If I didn't know better, I would think that someone had done the 'zine for him. Some people have all the luck.

# COMPUTER "COBRA"

Ever since the first crude, simplistic computer wargames were released, wargamers have been awaiting the day when they will be presented with a product that will make them forget that they are looking at a screen, and convince them that they have somehow been given electronic counters and mapboards, impervious to stacking problems, warping, and missing pieces, yet every bit as enjoyable as their paper counterparts.

The latest challenger for the title of computer messiah is a modestly-packaged game from Electronic Arts entitled *Patton v. Rommel*. It comes from the able mind of Chris Crawford, the same person who set the computer wargaming industry all aflutter with *Eastern Front* for the Atari, and then again with *Balance of Power*. I owned an Atari 800 at the time of *Eastern Front*'s release, and spent many long hours recreating Barbarossa on my monitor rather than on my *Drang Nach Osten* board. Unfortunately, I soon found that the computer could be consistently beaten, and my *Drang Nach Osten* set came out of hibernation once I discovered that one could destroy the entire Red Army and achieve the line Archangelsk-Astrakhan by mid-January 1942. Still, I was immensely impressed with the game, and sensed a revolution in computer wargames—a revolution I eagerly anticipated.

Sadly, the state-of-the-art in computer wargaming seems to have progressed very little since then. *Patton v. Rommel* is very similar to *Eastern Front* in its mechanics, although there have been some refinements. The graphics, although obviously not in color, are fairly impressive; the topographical projection of the playing area is well-done, and takes advantage of the Macintosh's high-resolution display. Physically, the game looks rather nice.

Despite the name, the game covers the Allied breakout from Normandy, codenamed Operation Cobra, from July 26th to August 8th. The map is bounded approximately by Lessay—St. Lô—Caen—Falaise—Argentan—Carrouges—St. Hilaire—Avranches—Granville. Turns are a day long, and the scale is divisional. Outwardly, the game typifies the early SPI ziplock operational-level wargame. Fortunately, there is more to the game than that. Unfortunately, the overall effect is not much better.

Like any worthwhile computer simulation, turns are resolved simultaneously, with the player entering orders for all of his units and informing the computer when he is ready for the turn to be resolved. Each unit is given a sequence of orders, specifying the unit's mode (attack/defence [mobile/standard/static]—road), facing, and movement. Changing modes/facings takes a specified amount of time, with the turn being updated every five or so minutes (of game time). In real time, the days fly right along. Combat is only allowed during daylight hours (0600-2000), with the remaining time being taken up by movement and facing/mode changes.

Each unit is rated for size (the total number of men/tanks/artillery) and strength (the number of *available* men/tanks/artillery). The greater the disparity between a unit's total strength and available strength, the lower the unit's endurance. Units with low endurance are referred to as being "cracked". Once a unit cracks, it defaults to mobile defence mode, giving ground and seeking to minimize its casualties. A large part of the game is knowing which units will be able to carry out a sustained assault, and which will crack after the first attack. Once the turn resolution has begun, there is no way to change a unit's orders, so a unit which cracks at 0630 is useless for the rest of the day, and is also susceptible to counterattacks. This makes for some careful planning when entering orders.

All in all, the basic mechanics of the game, while not spectacular, are well-founded, although the actual manner in which battles and movement are resolved remains rather obscure. Consequently, it is difficult to pinpoint exactly why the game fails to impress. I have a few ideas, though.

First of all, because combat and movement are resolved in terms of pixels, not by any grid reference, visualizing how a turn will develop is particularly difficult. This makes it nearly impossible to coordinate units with any efficiency. Lacking any clear explanation of how terrain affects movement, how combat is resolved, or how units recover from extreme fatigue (I have sometimes pushed cracked enemy units halfway across the board, pounded them with relentless fire, only to find them completely fresh for the next day's combat), even the *Patton v. Rommel* veteran may find himself crashing his divisions into one another, causing massive traffic jams, and failing to exploit obvious opportunities. While it is refreshing to have to deal with the problems of force coordination, not having any solid frame of reference to evaluate a unit's potential performance makes things a trifle absurd. Sure, one can look at the relative sizes of units, their endurances, and their modes, but correlating this data with any plausible combat outcome is laughable. It would be nice to know why

the tiny British 50th Infantry can sometimes push a massive German panzer division for miles on end, and sometimes end up being eliminated completely at the start. The tactic of attacking a unit's flank, while strongly recommended by the game manual, doesn't seem to have any consistent effect. I'd sure like to see the way the computer rolls the dice.

Secondly, the way in which the system channels the game tends to be rather dull. Rather than being a breakout, the game resembles the Battle of the Somme. Zones of control trap units, making everything but the largest hole unexploitable. The entire game gives one the impression of having had molasses poured over it. Historically, the Allies captured Avranches (about two-thirds of the way down the map) by July 30th. In the game, an Allied player is hard-pressed to get the Allied line that far south at all, never mind after two game-days. The bulk of the Allies' points will come from marauding armor units which manage to punch through the German line and stay there, running from town to town and making them Allied-controlled while combat continues at the front, many miles to the north. Because of the slow speed of reaction, a hole in the line can rarely be exploited. The game does have a feature where the two leaders (Patton and Rommel) are assigned to actual units, giving the player the ability to change the orders of units within a certain radius of the leader unit at any time. However, if the breakthrough does not occur in close proximity to the Patton unit, the best one can hope for is the "lone wolf" effect described above.

One unusual feature included in the game is the dubiously-named "wargame design kit." Far from being such, it gives one the ability to redefine the strengths and sizes of units, reposition them on the map, and even rename them. ("Ha ha, let's call the Panzer Lehr the 'Führer's Fanny Brigade'! What a laugh!") Needless to say, this sort of useless capability adds nothing to the enjoyability of the game, and is a far cry from being the "wargame design kit" it is advertised as. It vaguely reminds me of a game of *Russian Campaign* in which the players decide to reduce the strengths of all the Axis units by half, and then use the Kursk scenario start line. Hardly a credible way of modifying the game.

Probably the most annoying thing about the game, however, is the feature which has the respective generals appear in a window in the middle of the screen after every turn, advising the player of a particular shortcoming in his strategy with a trite one-liner. Fortunately, this can be turned off. More frequently, I just turn the entire game off.

The game even has a few bugs, which is surprising with a product of its intended quality. On the German side, the Rommel advice box sometimes shows Rommel's picture without the attendant one-liner, or just shows an empty window. The computer also fails to redraw the screen after one selects "About *Patton v. Rommel*" from the Apple menu, leaving a hideous white box on the screen. Such bugs, however, are barely noticeable in a program as full of problems as this one. \$33.95 is a lot to pay for this thing.

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## HAVE EXOCET, WILL TRAVEL

Much better offering in the computer wargaming department comes from Strategic Simulations, Inc., the company whose games I always drooled over when I saw them at the store but was unable to buy because they were primarily for the Apple II and the Commodore 64. Finally, someone at SSI has deigned to share the wealth with Macintosh owners, and *North Atlantic '86* has been converted for the Mac.

The scenario upon which the game is based is not entirely credible, but makes for an interesting game situation. The Soviets have overrun all of Europe and Scandinavia, leaving only Great Britain unconquered. Taking over several former NATO airbases, they are poised to deny supplies to Great Britain and starve it into submission. All that stands between the Soviets and victory is the remnants of the Royal Navy, the United States Atlantic Fleet, and American and British theater air forces based at Scapa Flow, the Faroe Islands, Iceland, and America. The game centers around the control of the bases at Iceland and the Faroes, and the maintenance of adequate supplies in the UK.

The map, although far from being state-of-the-art, is a functional and clear representation of the GIUK Gap from the Kola Peninsula to Brittany, and from the Baltic to the area south of Greenland. Movement is regulated by a square (that's right) grid, and turns are approximately twelve hours long.



Each individual ship and aircraft is rated in a number of different areas, such as ASW search capability, radar and EW strength, missile defense, cargo capacity, SSM/ASW/AST weaponry, and a lot more. One could drown in the sea of data built into the game.

Since the game is operational in scale, much that goes on at the tactical level is left up to the computer. When one fires surface-to-surface missiles, for example, one only fires at a target task force; the actual ship targetting is determined by probabilities calculated by the computer. Despite this, there is plenty for the player to do. First, one must organize task forces, assign missions to them, lead them to their targets, decide which planes to fly as CAP and which planes to strike with, when to transfer supplies and make airborne assaults, and the like. Once task forces have been formed, they are moved on the map, with the computer conducting searches for enemy task forces. CAP is flown and airstrikes are planned. Any remaining aircraft may be transferred from one base to another. Finally, missiles may be launched at any sighted task forces within range. Once all this has been entered, the computer shows the turn's resolution in a series of text displays. For example, a Soviet airstrike from Bergen of Backfire bombers against a US carrier group will be revealed to the player first as "AEW aircraft from CVN-Nimitz detect air group from Bergen". If the NATO player had flown long-range CAP, a fraction of it would then launch AAMs, with the message, "Tomcat from CVN-Nimitz launch x Phoenix", the x depending on the number of planes flying CAP. Destroyed bombers would be listed as, "x Backfire destroyed!!!", and the remaining bombers would attack with the message of "x Backfire launch AS-6 missiles". If the target task force had any CAP flying, those fighters would launch more AAMs, after which the number of ASMs destroyed would be displayed, and the rest would target individual ships with the warning of "AS-6 approaching BB-New Jersey". After all the missiles had attacked, the next strike would be resolved.

While this sounds like a lot of sitting around and reading text, it is actually quite fun. The suspense can really mount as one wonders whether or not his CAP can destroy enough incoming ASMs to protect his valuable transports and carriers, or as one watches his missiles from a carefully-planned strike miss, one after another, leaving the Soviet cruisers unscathed. A huge airstrike against a base can be decimated by unexpected CAP, with the player unable to do anything but watch helplessly. Attacks can look very imposing during the planning stage, but the suspense created during resolution keeps one's attention throughout.

*North Atlantic '86* is unique in that it truly utilizes the full capabilities of the computer with regard to record-keeping and game mechanics. For example, the procedure for attacking a submarine actually takes into account sub speed, ASW ship speed, sub EW strength, ASW ship sonar strength, and AST/ASW system range, yet all the player sees is "DD-Radford launches ASROC", followed either by nothing or by "ASROC hits SSNG-C12!!!". Hidden movement and searches are carried out in complete secrecy. Each ship expends ammunition for each weapons system individually, and the computer keeps track of this automatically. Imagine having to do this in a boardgame.

The attention to detail is nice, although it is sometimes rather uneven. Aircraft engaged in dogfight combat at night (on PM turns) must first locate their targets using radar (each aircraft type having an individual radar strength). Transport aircraft (C-141 and AN-12) transport fewer supplies per plane as the transport distance increases, due to the added fuel requirements and the corresponding reduction in weight allocated for stores. On the other hand, the game does not allow the relatively straightforward practice of airdropping supplies. Also, no provision is made for runway cratering; while a large airstrike may destroy many aircraft sitting on the tarmac, the attendant runways remain untouched. The only way to shut down an airfield completely is to suppress it by ground fire.

Nevertheless, these flaws do not detract from what is obviously a superior design. While not quite *Flat Top* for the computer, the game does convey much of the flavor and feel of that excellent boardgame. In addition, it has the bonus of being a fantastic two-player game, which is more than can be said for many computer wargames. In fact, the two-player game is arguably better than the solitaire version, as play is less stereotyped and strategies become more varied. The only real playability problem is the fact that the two campaign games included among the four scenarios are 232- and 122-turns long. This means that several sessions are required to complete a game (although far fewer hours are needed than is stated on the box; a full playing of the 232-turn campaign game might take 25-30 hours alone, and 50 or so hours with two players). Those desiring shorter games can play the very short Convoy and Iceland scenarios, but the real challenge is undoubtedly the long campaign game.

In short, this is a must-buy. At \$50.95 it is rather expensive, but who said that fun is cheap?



## Yes, I know.

I'm sure you were wondering how long it would be before I got to this part. This issue is late. Very late, actually. In fact, between the never-ending ribbing I've been getting from Jeff Zarse about semi-annual publishing and the polite inquiries I've received about the status of the zine, I'd say "**BI**" is becoming synonymous with "lateness" in a big way. This is a shame, as I never meant to become one of "those" zines, which appear irregularly and frustrate all attempts on the part of their readers to participate and contribute. Nevertheless, the nature of the zine, as well as my life, perhaps made this inevitable. Once school heated up in the spring, I began to begrudge the zine any time it took away from my schoolwork. Eventually, I decided that priorities were priorities, and that **BI** would have to wait. However, once I finished school, I became so obsessed with the idea of making up for lost time that I wanted to put *everything* into this issue. Consequently, I delayed and delayed, hoping to cram in as much as possible. Finally, I came to the realization that I had better put out *something*, and this is what you get. Not much, I know, but at least you know I'm here. I simply dumped the first forty-eight pages of material that I had written into the zine, and held back the newer stuff for next issue. If some of the material herein seems a bit old, that's because it is. I don't want to go the way of Steve Knight.

All that stuff some of you might have heard about quarterly or semi-annual publishing schedules for **BI** is ridiculous, the product of Zarsian propaganda, and I don't much care for the hastiness of those publishers who, failing to understand Jeff's humor, passed this information along without even bothering to check with me. The schedule might indeed be working out that way, but by accident, not by design. My intention is still a six-week zine, and I'm planning to stick with it. In order to prove this, I **promise** to have another issue out in four to six weeks. #5 will be a bit of a departure from what you've seen in the past. I have some material completed already, and in order to prevent overload, I've decided to keep the issue fairly short (say, twenty pages or so). There will be more original material, fewer game reports, and fewer letters (but don't stop writing). It may be the **BI** of the future. I hope you will enjoy it. If not, it might mean that we will be going back to the monster issues. Perhaps I can find some appropriate middle ground for the zine.

One thing that I'm afraid I'll have to do, however, is cut all of my trades. I don't want anyone to think that I actually expect other publishers to keep sending me their zines while I don't produce anything. I am giving you my assurances that I plan on being more responsible in the future, but this is just my word, and I realize that this is little comfort for you publishers who send out so many of your issues in exchange for so few of mine. This is unfair, and I realize this. Consequently, all publishers with whom I trade should find refund checks for the approximate number of issues they have sent me, minus three issues of **BI**, enclosed with this issue. Fortunately, my bookkeeping is all computerized, so I have accurate records of who has sent what.

Lastly, I'd like to thank every single **BI** subscriber for not giving up on me during the interim. I got a few polite postcards and a phone call or two, but these were delivered with the utmost tact, and I got the general impression that everyone was being quite patient. Thank you — I appreciate it. I sincerely hope that there is no further call for such patience on your part.

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Well, I see that even after that sniveling editorial, there is some white space left on this page. In this case, I'll simply find something to babble about for a bit. Let's see ... what books have I been reading this summer? I'll make a list: *Towards a Marxist Humanism: Essays on the Left*, Leszek Kolakowski; *Campaigns of Napoleon*, David Chandler; *Being and Time*, Martin Heidegger; *The Messiah of Stockholm*, Cynthia Ozick; *Red Storm Rising*, Tom Clancy; *The Sorrows of Werther*, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe; *Conversations with Lukacs*; *Christology at the Crossroads*, Karl Rahner; and that's all I can remember. Sure is nice to get away from schoolwork for a change!

Still haven't filled the page? Hmmm.... Tomorrow Steve Clark and I are going to Russ Rusnak's for an afternoon of gaming. It seems that Russ has this new game he wants to try out, called *Titian*, which involves mustering and battling with various famous works of art...